3 1761 11853998 0


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
University of Toronto

https://archive.org/details/31761118539980

CA2ON
XI
-D23

Government
Publications

75

No. 213

Nº 213

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

**Thursday 3 July 1997**

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Jeudi 3 juillet 1997**

LIBRARY
JUL 8 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

**Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

**Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

**Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

**Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

**Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 July 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 juillet 1997

*The House met at 1331.*
*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CARUSO CLUB ITALIAN FESTIVAL

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I invite and am very proud to invite all members and all Ontarians to Sudbury this weekend to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Caruso Club Italian Festival. The festival is an example of the vibrancy of the Italian community in Sudbury. Its activities reflect and highlight Italian culture and our traditions.

The weekend begins Friday at 6:30 with the official opening, followed by a food fair and a cultural night featuring young Italian talent such as Jessica Natale and Angela Scappatura. During Saturday there are hosts of activities for people to become involved in. Saturday evening we feature the Miss Caruso pageant MC'd by André and Nancy Fragomeni Beaudry.

Sunday, after the bishop's mass, there is a brunch. During Sunday afternoon there is a mini-carnival for everyone to take part in. All weekend long, hot Italian sausages are barbecued by Peter Niro, Larry Dovigi and friends. They're always on the grill and they're always very, very edible. Sunday evening the festival ends with the traditional pasta dinner, and we dance into the wee hours of the morning.

The Italian community in Sudbury is alive and strong. Its contributions to Sudbury and the region are enormous. Congratulations, Caruso Club. Congratulations, Italians.

### TORONTO FRINGE THEATRE FESTIVAL

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** In 1997, the Fringe, Toronto's theatre festival, celebrates its ninth year as a leader of independent theatre development in Toronto. Last year 30,000 people attended, contributing over $2 million to our local economy. Our festival's successes meant fringe theatre festivals are now a national movement.

Starting today and running to Sunday, July 13, the Fringe welcomes 83 theatre companies, which together will stage over 600 shows in the Annex neighbourhood in Toronto. The Fringe is a success story amid the sad tale of cuts to the arts in Ontario, cuts that harm our cultural communities and push theatres in Ontario close to the edge of collapse.

The Mike Harris government and Culture Minister Marilyn Mushinski have cut 40% of the funding for the Ontario Arts Council since 1995. That's a reduction of $17.3 million, returning OAC funding to 1975 levels. And the arts cuts don't stop there. Cuts like these threaten exciting and successful festivals like the Fringe. Cuts like these force successful publishers out of business. Cuts like these close theatres.

I congratulate the artists and organizers for continuing to put on the Fringe in the face of these massive cuts, and I encourage all artists and organizations to join in the arts fax-in on July 10 to tell Minister Mushinski and Premier Harris to rescind their 1997 15% cut to the Ontario Arts Council.

### ADRIAN MUCALOV

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** It is indeed a pleasure to notify you of the latest academic accomplishment of a former grade 11 history student of mine at Dr John M. Denison Secondary School in Newmarket. Nineteen-year-old Ontario academic credit student Adrian Mucalov earned a 99.83% grade average during his final year at Dr Denison. Adrian doesn't want to make too much of his marks because going to school is only a part of what he does so well. He also excels in music, athletics, community activities, and is gaining experience this summer by working as a teller and customer service representative at a major bank.

Adrian says: "What feels great is that I've fulfilled my potential. I reached all my goals. That's what's really important...that I reached all the goals I set for myself."

Adrian's father, Peter, a Keswick family physician, said the Mucalov family knew he was doing well, they just didn't know exactly how well he was doing.

The key to Adrian's success story has been his ability to apply knowledge in a new and more productive way and to demonstrate a willingness to embrace new things and never accept the status quo.

I wish Adrian Mucalov continued success as he studies commerce at Queen's University in Kingston, aided by the prestigious Queen's chancellor's scholarship and a Canadian merit scholarship.

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Today we are back to debate the truck safety legislation — this is what the government has said — and also the Integrity Commissioner motion. The government saw that their priority was beyond discussing safety on the highways. We had hoped this government would have then stated very emphatically that safety was a priority at the time we adjourned, but we had to come back again for this separate day.

My constituency was alarmed actually to see some of the things that were being debated and that the rules changes are going to change this world overnight. As a comment in one of the prominent newspapers stated, this government is much more concerned to rule instead of to govern and they are obsessed to get the order today to ram things through. We hope that when the rules changes do come into effect, which of course they will — they have the majority — somehow there will be more participation. They said to me in my constituency about many of the people in the back bench, "I hope they will speak more for their constituency, because they don't seem to do so."

The government itself has muzzled most of its backbenchers. I want to see how much release they will have. Therefore, we are looking very, very carefully at these rules changes, which are a dictatorial approach to things, to see if we can see more democracy. I don't think so; I see some more dictatorship.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** As everybody in this House is aware, the residents of East York voted 81% against the megacity bill.

Last week my colleague Frances Lankin, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, introduced Bill 144, which would amend the megacity bill to ensure fairer representation for East York by increasing the number of councillors from the ward of East York from two to three. The current act would provide a lower councillor-to-resident ratio in East York ward at 1 to 54,000 compared to 1 to 38,000 on average across Metro.

One has to ask what this government has against East York. First of all, the two local members from the area supported the government against their own constituents, and now they're not even giving East York residents the same rights as residents from across Metro. The citizens of East York are about to lose their beloved borough, Canada's only borough, as their welcome signs never fail to remind us. In the interests of local democracy, let's at least ensure that they are adequately represented in the new megacity council chamber, that their voices and concerns will be heard.

Premier, get your House leader to call this bill for debate at the earliest opportunity so members of the House can make some, albeit small, improvements to your megacity legislation.

**1340**

## TAX CUT

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'm pleased today to rise to help celebrate tax freedom day in Ontario. According to the well-respected Fraser Institute, taxpayers in Ontario spent the first six months working to pay the government. Starting today, the hardworking taxpayers of Ontario can start to work for themselves and their families, and not simply for the tax man.

Previous governments consistently pushed tax freedom day later into the year by raising taxes and expanding the size of government. In 1985 tax freedom day was held on May 26. Since 1985 we've seen tax freedom day go to July 6. That is outrageous. The people of Ontario told this government that was not acceptable.

This year there is reason to celebrate because the tide has turned. Tax freedom day is three days earlier in 1997 than it was last year. After two years of cutting taxes, the people of Ontario are seeing the fruits of their provincial government's labours.

People in my riding of Nepean sent me to Queen's Park to help create a climate for job creation, to cut taxes and to balance the budget. I'm pleased to report that the plan is working. On Monday we saw the third instalment of the provincial income tax cut. This government is doing what it said it would do. Provincial income tax in Ontario has now been cut by 18.75%. Cutting taxes and balancing budgets helps create more jobs, more hope and more opportunities for the people of Nepean and Ontario.

My good friend the member for Scarborough-Agincourt said that when the NDP government raised taxes by $1 billion, it would kill 25,000 jobs. Regrettably, he was right. Cutting taxes has helped create 101,000 jobs in the last three months alone.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The people of this province should know that by far the most important legislative measure brought forward this session is not any particular bill on the government's agenda; rather, it is the package of changes to the procedural rules of this Parliament that will enable the Conservative regime of Mike Harris to ram through its radical, reckless program with a minimum of debate, discussion, analysis and scrutiny.

Even those who are in general agreement with some of the policies of this government want Mike Harris to slow down and do things right instead of simply doing them quickly. This, however, is not acceptable to the backroom boys in the Office of the Premier, the real power brokers in this government, whose goal is for absolute control and power.

These procedural rule changes amount to an NHL team filling its roster with goons, with players whose only role would be intimidation, then changing the rules to eliminate penalties, thus giving the government team an unfair advantage.

A democracy works best when a government which has a massive majority is not able to simply snap its fingers and a law is produced. If the proposed rule changes are imposed in their present form when the House returns in August, the skids will be greased for controversial legislation to be bulldozed through the Legislature in record time.

By restricting the amount of time for debate and discussion, bad laws will be passed and time for reconsideration and review will disappear.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Today I want to use my member's statement to make a direct plea to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The minister will know that I've introduced a private member's bill which would increase the representation of municipal councillors

in the borough of East York, in what will become a ward under the new megacity, from the current proposed two under the minister's megacity legislation to three.

I would point out to him that the population of the borough of East York is very similar to that of the current city of York. Under the megacity legislation he brought in, the city of York will get four councillors and the borough of East York will only get two. For a number of reasons those citizens, who you know are very opposed to your legislation — they don't like it; they don't want it, but recognize they're going to have to live with it — have made a very concrete and positive suggestion about how to improve your megacity legislation and how to improve the working of the community council, your solution to continued local democracy.

That private member's bill is sitting there, but I know you have a piece of legislation before the House, your megacity legislation which deals with transition issues. I implore you to please consider this amendment, to work with me, to allow me to bring forward the amendment in committee and to have your government caucus members on that committee support it.

Your answer has been that the council can deal with that in the future, but you know that would mean this election would go by. East York citizens would remain underrepresented. You can do something to correct that situation, Minister. I want to work with you to make that happen. I implore you to please take a look at this issue with me.

## COMMUNITY CARE

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I'm proud to stand in the House today because I am part of a government that's living up to its promises in making Ontario better.

Last Friday, the Minister of Health announced the reinvestment of $3.1 million into community long-term-care services in southwestern Ontario. A total of $1.5 million will ensure that people receive services like attendant outreach, adult day programs, palliative care and Meals on Wheels. A further reinvestment of $1.6 million in community care access centres will allow more patients recovering at home to receive visits from nurses, therapists and homemakers.

Of this announced reinvestment, my riding of Perth will receive nearly $1.3 million to expand the level of services available through outstanding agencies such as the Victorian Order of Nurses, Knollcrest Lodge, Spruce Lodge, Stratford Meals on Wheels, North Perth Community Hospice, North Perth Seniors' Centre, the community care access centre, and family services.

In addition to this good news, the new rural and northern health care framework was also announced by the minister last week. This framework ensures 24-hour access to health care for the people of my riding and will make it easier for small communities such as Mitchell to recruit and retain physicians.

As a government, we are removing waste and duplication from the system and reinvesting in front-line services. We are putting the patients first. This is important to the people of Perth, and I am proud to represent them.

# STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I have said in this House that the ministry has been taking several steps, a series of steps, to improve the child welfare system, and today I would like to announce another of those activities.

I would like to inform the members of a new mandatory risk assessment system or model to help identify and prevent child abuse and neglect. This new system will be used by child protection workers in children's aid societies across the province.

Every day, child protection workers must make difficult decisions to assess children at risk. They have been asking for a consistent system to guide their judgement in assessing these children. We want to provide these workers with the tools they need to do their jobs effectively. This new model is one of a series of steps the government is taking to strengthen the child protection system. The government has allocated an initial $15 million to support not only this new model but the other initiatives we are undertaking to prevent abuse and neglect of children.

The new risk assessment system will provide child protection workers with a step-by-step decision-making process to better assess the risk of abuse and neglect. It will help workers decide when a case should be investigated, whether a child is in imminent danger, and whether there is a risk of future abuse and neglect. This process will take into account risk factors such as substance abuse or a history of previous child abuse and neglect. It will lead to more informed and faster decisions to remove children from dangerous situations or to take other remedial action.

Starting this fall, child protection workers will be trained in using the new system. The government will provide the necessary funding to train the workers and implement the new model.

Today's announcement completes a five-month review and assessment of various risk management models that have been used in Canada and the United States. The chosen model is being used in four of the six provinces that employ formal risk assessment systems.

Research has shown that workers have found this particular risk assessment model to be effective in protecting children and easy to implement. The system helps workers assess the risk of abuse and neglect in the early phases of an investigation. It also provides workers with a constant focus on the child's safety while a thorough assessment of the child and the family is being undertaken.

The new system is one way we can help child protection workers to detect and prevent child abuse and neglect, and we are pleased that the Child Mortality Task Force has recommended this approach in their series of recommendations.

**1350**

My ministry has also undertaken another step to improve our child welfare system. Last month we tendered a contract for a new computer database. It will enable children's aid societies to keep track of high-risk cases, to alert each other to those cases and to track incidents of child abuse and neglect. Other initiatives under way include the establishment of an advisory panel to review child protection issues in the Child and Family Services Act. We will also work with professional organizations to increase their awareness of the requirement to report child abuse and neglect.

We've also heard the message about the need for intervention and prevention, which is why earlier this year the Premier announced an investment of approximately $45 million in four programs to help children. These include Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, a program which helps identify children and families at risk and provides them with appropriate supports; and Better Beginnings, Better Futures, which teaches parenting skills and provides other supports to parents in high-risk neighbourhoods.

Another we have under way is Ontario's reshaping of its system of support for children so that families across the province will have simpler, easier access to the services they need. As part of this effort, each community is expected to provide core services including those focusing on early intervention and prevention services for vulnerable children.

The government continues to work with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and the Native Child and Family Services of Ontario to review standards and strengthen the process for evaluating the performance of children's aid societies. The new risk assessment system announced today, additional resources for training and a province-wide computer database will improve the monitoring systems already in place.

Children are a priority for this government and we will be taking further steps to help protect children at risk of abuse and neglect. We are concerned about the safety of our children and we will continue to make improvements to keep our children safe.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** The response of the minister to the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force report is simply inadequate. It may be tragically inadequate in failing to take the necessary steps to end child abuse and to prevent more child deaths.

Minister, the initiatives you are taking are fine. They are not new. The $15 million to fund them was announced in the last budget. You have announced and reannounced in response to earlier coroners' reports, to investigations by the media, to questions from the opposition in this House, that you are looking at a new risk assessment tool, new reporting protocols, a new information system for children at risk. The surprise is that these are not in place now. They are needed initiatives, they will help, they are part of the solution, but they are simply not enough.

I draw you to the page of the task force report which you seem determined to ignore, as you've ignored the questions on this issue in the House all along, that the review of workloads throughout children's aid societies indicates that the system is operating beyond its capacity. They stress that none of your initiatives can work unless they can be properly implemented, and to properly implement them you need enough staff.

This is the issue you have refused to address time and time again. Our leader, Dalton McGuinty, has stood up in this House and asked you, "Will you restore the $17 million you took away from children's aid societies, the $17-million cut that forced them to lay off 340 staff?" Time and time again you came back and talked about risk assessment and about computers. You refused to acknowledge what the children's aid societies were saying, what the task force now says loudly and clearly: "There are not enough front-line workers out there to protect our children."

Minister, you say throwing money at it won't work, but the dollars for new staff are absolutely critical if we are going to save children's lives.

The risk assessment system detailing what a worker should do is not going to help if there aren't enough workers to investigate the concerns or to monitor the cases carefully enough. There is no risk assessment system that is going to take out the element of judgement, and you need workers who are not overloaded and working under stress if they are going to make good judgements. You need more workers and you need to put $17 million back into children's aid societies so they can hire them.

Your response is also completely inadequate on the issue of changes to the legislation that are needed: the Child and Family Services Act changes. Again our leader has been asking for months for you to bring in these changes to the act. The task force report says that changing this act to define neglect and provide protection on the grounds of neglect is critical. You have known for months that this was an issue. You've been asked repeatedly to bring in the changes to legislation. Not only do we not see the legislation today, but you don't even make reference to bringing in legislation in your response to the task force. That is unconscionable and inexcusable.

But the ultimate failure of your government is found in the very last statement of the task force, in which they recommend that the province of Ontario develop a "children first" approach and evaluate all new activities and initiatives in the context of the impact they will have on children.

It makes me want to weep when I read that. I know how your government's initiatives over and over again have hurt children, have hurt families and have hurt women in single-parent families who are so often the caregivers of children at risk. I go back to the 23% cut in welfare payments to these families. Those hurt children most of all, the half a million children in Ontario who are on social assistance. Acknowledge that more and more children in this province are having to use food banks because they're hungry. Is that not abuse that your government is responsible for? How does that fit with the "children first" approach the task force has recommended?

You ended any new subsidized housing and you're trying to offload the housing that you have on to municipalities. In Metro Toronto alone, 600 individuals are in

temporary shelters, and you are surely aware that the largest proportion of children in those families in temporary shelters are five years of age or under. I don't need to remind you of the five-year-old who died just recently living in one of those temporary shelters.

You've cut funding for emergency shelters. You've cut funding for counselling for children. The list goes on and on.

In May our leader raised with you the concern of the coroner investigating the death of Shanay Johnson. The coroner said there was no one there acting as an advocate for children in your ministry. The coroner said there should be a provincial director for child protection and you said we don't need another bureaucrat. Maybe not, but we need an advocate for children. Today you've given us bureaucracy. You have given us no people to work with children and no advocacy for children in your government.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm glad to see that you're announcing the new risk assessment tool. It's good that it's going to be in place. Another announcement with respect to the computer system: We've heard that many times. This is the tender. I'd like to know when it's going to be implemented, and I hope the implementation of that goes smoothly because those are some useful tools.

But I've got to tell you I am most disappointed that when there's such a needed response from government, your response has fallen woefully short of that need. Tools are important, and I will acknowledge that, but if you don't have the front-line staff to use those tools, to employ those tools, to go out and really intervene in a way that is going to protect children at risk, then the tools will lie idle and you won't have accomplished what you say is your stated goal.

Time and time again I've asked you these questions. When I've raised this issue, I've tried to point out that the cuts you have made to children's aid societies have affected them right at the very front line of delivery of service. The workload situation in children's aid society after children's aid society across this province is reaching critical levels. There have been articles in local communities that have talked about the desperate state, financially as well as staff resourcewise.

Let me refer to Simcoe. The Simcoe Children's Aid Society has found that their caseload in the first five months of this year is already more than two times last year's total. Social workers are carrying the highest caseloads they've had in 15 years. This is an issue that previous governments have tried to address by increasing the number of case workers out there, by giving more resources. Your response has been the exact opposite, and when we've raised these concerns you've said, "We're a government that's not just going to throw money at the problem."

It's throwing human resources that we're asking for that are going to intervene in human situations in families to protect children. These risk assessment tools are useful, but for a staff person, a social worker out on the front line who is overwhelmed by the caseload they are facing, it won't make a difference whether they have a risk assessment tool or not. They don't have the time and the ability to get to all the families in need out there. Minister, you must address that issue. You can't continue to turn a blind eye to it.

**1400**

I appreciate that you're moving with respect to setting up a task force to look at the legislation. On that point, I've asked you time and time again in this House to make this a non-partisan effort, to allow a legislative committee to work with the experts in the field and to work with families who've experienced use of the system to develop proposals for what should happen in changes to the legislation.

By shuffling it outside, by having communication only between you and the people out there whom you hand-select, you once again re-create a situation where people believe this is not an open process, where they can't have a say, where the people who live and work in communities and represent people in communities, and the legislators of this province, can't have a non-partisan working relationship with you to try and develop appropriate recommendations for legislative change.

All of this you do without acknowledging the impact of other actions of your government with respect to children and what is happening out there. You can't continue to turn a blind eye to poverty and what poverty means in terms of developing children and families at risk. Your social service cuts, your cuts to social welfare rates, have left many more families at risk in this province, many more children living in poverty.

Your initiatives like your child care tax credit do nothing to reach into that community. They don't assess the poorest children in this province. Those are the kids who are going to need help. Those are the kids who are going to need early intervention and prevention programs. Those are the services you're downloading to communities and are cutting support for. The children's aid societies and the front-line workers are overwhelmed. A new risk assessment tool is not going to help them reach out and find those children and take the necessary steps.

It's a useful tool you've introduced, but it's been introduced into a context where there is a vacuum of government leadership with respect to dealing with the most vulnerable children in this province. We have seen the statistics. We have seen the names. We have seen the tragic stories of young children, of babies, who are dying because of neglect and because of abuse.

Your ministry must be the place where there is a centralized advocate. You must take on that role. You must go to the Treasurer and to the Premier and ask to have the funding cuts restored to ensure there are adequate resources on the front line to make sure that children in need get the help they deserve and that all of us want to make sure they get.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Solicitor General, and it's a question about Ipperwash. The government has said many times

that they were waiting for the trial to be over before they appointed a public inquiry into the situation at Ipperwash. Today the trial is over and the sentencing has been done. There's no longer a reason for the government to hold off.

The Solicitor General will know that we in the opposition and the public have many substantial, serious unanswered questions that only a public inquiry will answer. Will you now agree to holding the public inquiry into the situation at Ipperwash?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** As the member opposite knows, it is not the responsibility of the Solicitor General to call for a public inquiry. That responsibility lies with the Attorney General under the Public Inquiries Act.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** And he's not here.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I respect the fact that he's not here. We met — I met, the Attorney General met — with the leaders of the first nations last week and this issue was discussed. I reiterated the position of the government that there are a number of matters ongoing with respect to the criminal charges, which have been dealt with up to this point in time, but there are other civil actions and there's a strong possibility of a coroner's inquest, which will be resolved in the near future.

Dependent upon whether there is an appeal with respect to the criminal charges — I think it's a 30-day period; it could be longer. I'm not an expert in this area. There is a period of time allotted with respect to Mr Deane filing an appeal. I think we'll have to await the outcome of that matter.

**Mr Phillips:** The public is aware of the serious unanswered questions. The government chose to ignore the fact that there was a burial ground in that park. The government made the decision to get the occupiers out of the park ASAP; that was not left to the police. The government decided to take a different course than the OPP had planned; that was not left to the police. The day of the shooting there was a headline in the local paper saying, "Queen's Park Plans to Take Hard Line with Occupiers"; that was an action by the government. The Premier's executive assistant was at meetings daily for a month, two-to-three-hour meetings, and the Premier said she never once kept a note, a file or a memo.

We have a legal opinion that says you can proceed with a public inquiry now. Are you prepared, Minister, to table your legal opinion that says you cannot proceed with a public inquiry now?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** We've been around this road on many occasions, and it's been clearly indicated by various members of the government that no one has ruled out the possibility of an inquiry, if and when all the matters are completed.

Certainly there are a number of civil actions that have been filed. The outcome with respect to the criminal matter has not been finalized; there's still the possibility of an appeal in terms of the conviction. There is a strong possibility with respect to the calling of a coroner's inquest. An inquest in itself, with the ability to call witnesses for cross-examination, could resolve some of the lingering questions surrounding this matter. It's clear that it would be premature at this time to make a commitment with respect to a public inquiry.

**Mr Phillips:** It's clear that the last thing you want to do is have a public inquiry, but it's not clear to anyone that you cannot call a public inquiry. I again say to you, we have a legal opinion that says, "Westray" — this is the precedent the legal opinion cites — "now stands as a recent unanimous statement by the Supreme Court that a public inquiry may proceed" in a situation exactly like that in which we find ourselves. In other words, you can commit today, the government can commit today to a public inquiry.

I repeat, there are serious unanswered questions about the whole sorry episode involving the Premier and involving senior members of the government. You've put the OPP, in our opinion, in an intolerable position. You've had a tragic conflict between the government and the first nations. We have a legal opinion that says you can proceed with a public inquiry. I repeat, are you prepared to table your legal opinion that says you cannot proceed now with a public inquiry?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm not sure what the process is with respect to receiving the opinion. I'm sure the Ministry of the Attorney General would be prepared to consider reviewing the legal opinion the member opposite has. I'm of the understanding that the Ministry of the Attorney General has an opinion which does not agree with respect to this.

If we look back a number of years ago when the Liberal government was in power, the Patti Starr inquiry was launched by your government and then there was an indication that it could not proceed with respect to ongoing criminal matters. I think it's clear there is still the possibility of ongoing criminal matters with respect to an appeal of the conviction of Acting Sergeant Deane. Clearly, based on what has happened in the past under the tenure of the Liberal government, it would be premature to make a commitment at this point in time.

**Mr Phillips:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm prepared to table our legal opinion. I'll do that immediately.

**1410**

## SUNNYBROOK HEALTH SCIENCE CENTRE

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I have a question to the Deputy Premier. I'd like to ask you about some people, people named John Davis, Janina Zaorski, Fred Robinson, William Brazier. Those are the names of four patients who died at Sunnybrook hospital. This morning the Ontario Nurses' Association presented the point of view that those deaths were connected to cutbacks, the unfortunate Harris hospital cutbacks that have been made, $19 million at Sunnybrook alone. One of those incidents was a fire that took place in a ward where 20 beds had been moved into another ward with no additional staff being added.

There have been five deaths at that hospital, which I am quick to say is one of the highest-rated hospital institutions in this province. If it's happening there, imagine what it is like elsewhere in the province. The

Ontario Nurses' Association believes there is a link. Will you support their call for a public inquiry?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The honourable member will certainly know that with respect to three of the deaths at Sunnybrook hospital there is currently a call for a coroner's inquest. I'm sure that inquest will get to the root of some of the issues with respect to those individuals. He will also be aware, I'm sure, that Mr Tom Closson, the CEO of Sunnybrook, has stated today that he does not believe the recent incidents at Sunnybrook are in any way, shape or form a result of budgetary reductions.

**Mr Kennedy:** Unfortunately, the Deputy Premier is not coming to terms with the crisis of confidence that is starting to develop out there on the part of the public, and the reason is very simple. If there is no problem at Sunnybrook, let's clear the air, let's have a public inquiry. There have been four times as many complaints about heavy workload, overload, by nurses there so far this year as there were for all of 1996. It's your cutbacks that are creating the work conditions that have nurses at Sunnybrook afraid of what's going to happen on their shift.

Deputy Premier, you can't get away from the fact that it was your government, the Harris government, that made those cuts. It was your budget that took the money away from Sunnybrook. That may be what the CEO has to say about his fine institution, but we need to know and the public needs to know. There needs to be an inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act where staff can testify without fear of reprisal. If you want to restore public confidence, you'll agree to that today. Will you?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I'm sure the honourable member in no way wants to impugn the reputation of Sunnybrook hospital, which, as he quite correctly pointed out, is one of the finest health care facilities in the province. It is indeed unfortunate that these tragic deaths have occurred, but as I indicated in my initial response, there is a coroner's inquest that will look into three of those deaths resulting from the particular fire incident and I'm sure the coroner's inquest will get to the root of the cause of that particular incident.

He might also know that the Ontario Nurses' Association has had a different opinion in the past. He will know that Jane Cornelius, the past president of the ONA, is quoted as saying:

"While many other groups in the health care system are fighting to maintain the status quo, 92% of Ontario nurses say they want the system to be fundamentally restructured and redesigned. Nurses believe that if medicare is to be preserved, we must fundamentally change the way it is funded, structured, managed and governed."

**Mr Kennedy:** It is not confidence-building to the public, to the patients or to the people in this House that you would resort to old quotes from the Ontario Nurses' Association. Let me give you a quote from today. They want a patient inquiry because their members are afraid of the quality of care; 85% of them say the quality of care has deteriorated since you made your cuts.

I want to quote your health minister, who said just a week ago, "There is no evidence of cuts to patient care in this province." You cannot hide, like he would like to hide. We have the Ontario Nurses' Association, we have nurses from K wing, where these people died, we have the opinion of respected professionals in this province that there needs to be a public inquiry.

If you wish to continue to hide, all you are doing is contributing to the problems of confidence that your budget cuts have created. Will you agree at least to a public inquiry where we can get at the systemic causes of why patients aren't getting good care and why nurses have to operate in fear of what will happen in their institutions?

**Hon Mr Eves:** First of all, there is already an external safety review going on with respect to Sunnybrook's Kilgour wing. This review is expected to be completed by the end of the month and we will see at the end of that period of time if any additional reviews are indeed necessary or indicated.

I would quite agree that these are unfortunate events. However, I don't think one should automatically jump to any conclusions and I don't think you are serving the system well, quite frankly, by doing that. Since 1993, Sunnybrook Health Science Centre has increased the amount of acute nursing care per patient. Those are also statistics.

If the honourable member would wait until the external review is complete with respect to external safety review, if he would wait until the coroner's inquest is complete and we can get the facts — that's why we have coroners' inquests, to get the facts and get to the bottom of unfortunate incidents such as these.

## REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** A question to the Deputy Premier: Later this afternoon we will debate the report of the Integrity Commissioner on the inappropriate activities of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. When the motion passes, and I assume it will, it will then go to committee and it will be up to the committee members to look at the actions of this minister who has shown repeatedly a contempt for democracy and for the people of this province. I won't recite the three incidents that have happened just this session. This is a serious matter, involving public confidence in an elected member. The committee must be allowed to do a thorough job.

Will you commit today that should the committee request the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to appear before it, the government will not block his appearance in any way and you will not attempt to persuade government members to block the appearance?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The leader of the third party has been around here long enough to know that committees order their own business. They will indeed determine. It is not for me in my capacity as Deputy Premier or for anybody else to dictate to the committee what they will do. It's up to the committee to order its own business, so we'll see what happens.

**Mr Hampton:** I am interested in the Deputy Premier's use of the word "dictate" because members of your own caucus have used that in reference to the way in which

the Premier's office tries to dictate how people act on committee or what positions they take, or what positions they take on public issues. We know, for example, that three government members were disciplined by your government for speaking their minds.

In order that the people of Ontario can be assured this will be a full process and a fair process that will really get a look at what happened here, will you make another commitment? Will you commit that you will not try to influence the government members on the committee and will you commit that there will be no effort on the part of the Premier's office or the whip's office or the Deputy Premier's office to hold back the minister from appearing before the committee?

**Hon Mr Eves:** Those will be matters for the committee and the minister themselves to decide. I might say, though, with respect to the particular report about the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, that the Integrity Commissioner did find, as I am sure you are aware, that the minister acted in good faith and on the belief that he was entitled to do so when he wrote to the commission. I think it would do you well to remember that statement by the Integrity Commissioner.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to read to you an amendment that we are going to move to your motion today. The amendment is this: "Further, in the opinion of this assembly, proper consideration of the Integrity Commissioner's report will require the participation of the Minister of Health and the member for St George-St David as committee witnesses." If you're interested in having a full and open and fair process, will you commit to voting for this amendment, Deputy Premier?

**Hon Mr Eves:** People don't usually commit to voting on anything during question period. The way this process works is that the matter will be debated later on.

**Mr Hampton:** You have no clothes, Ernie.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I think I have some.

**Mr Hampton:** Despite all the money you spend, you have no clothes.

**Mr Wildman:** The emperor has no clothes — deputy emperor, sorry.

**Hon Mr Eves:** The individual members —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Deputy Premier, hold on. Order. Deputy Premier.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Individual members in the Legislative Assembly will vote on this motion, will vote on any amendment to it, as they see fit. That's the way this place operates.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** I regret that the Deputy Premier can't commit that he would favour a full and fair process with the committee.

**1420**

## MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Two local contractors bid on an MTO highway maintenance contract for the area between Thessalon and Elliot Lake. Their bid was the lowest cost, and as part of the bid they would have re-employed many MTO workers.

A company called IMOS also bid on the contract. IMOS was not the low bidder. You remember IMOS. They employ one of your former assistant deputy ministers who breached the conflict-of-interest rules.

The two local contractors were notified by MTO that the contract would not be awarded. They were the low bidders but they were told, "We're not going to award the contract."

Minister, I'm going to ask you the same question these contractors asked you in their letter of June 9: Was this contract cancelled because IMOS, your friends at IMOS, were not the low bidders?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member for the question. If you were to ask your critic, I believe he shed some information on this particular issue and how it was handled, and there were supposedly some things that weren't done according to the Scriptures, although we believe it is to the contrary. I believe all the precautions were taken in making sure the tendering process was done in a fair way.

I want to say to the member that I do not know who was the low bidder or who was not the low bidder. As far as I know, as far as the information I have, these envelopes were not opened because of the inquiries that are being done at present.

**Mr Hampton:** I think the minister is a bit confused here. I'm not talking about the situation in Cochrane South. I'm talking about a contract that was put out in the Algoma district between Thessalon and Elliot Lake. The tenders were indeed opened. There is recognition that the two local contractors were indeed the low bidders, there is recognition that IMOS was not the low bidder, but the contract was cancelled. The two local contractors, who put in a very good bid and would have re-employed the majority of MTO workers, were told, "No, we're not going to tender the contract."

I'm asking you, Minister, why was that contract not put out? Why was it cancelled? Is it because IMOS was not the low bidder?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I want to correct what I said earlier. I misunderstood the honourable member. I thought he was referring to the maintenance contracts that have been pulled back. As far as this particular project, I haven't got any information, but I will take it under advisement and get back to the member.

**Mr Hampton:** It doesn't end there, though. My colleague from Cochrane South gave you the example a couple of weeks ago where MTO employees are being told by way of government memoranda to apply to IMOS for jobs even before contracts have been let. We've had that clearly on the record.

The Kingston Whig-Standard reported this past week that your former ADM, Carl Vervoort, is now project director for the Wolfe, Howe and Amherst Island ferry service. Their business plan — and get this. They got a contract with MTO with no public tender.

Here's the scenario: Mr Vervoort quit his job at MTO to go to work for IMOS the same day that IMOS got a $29-million MTO contract based on Mr Vervoort's recommendation. Now we see memos floating around MTO saying, "Apply to IMOS," and now Mr Vervoort is getting —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much. Minister of Transportation.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I would like to reassure the House and the member that there were no irregularities. As far as the member saying that because of —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Just a minute. Members for Riverdale and Cochrane South, come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You're the closest.

Minister of Transportation.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I want to say again I believe there were no irregularities. As far as that word that was not omitted from the pamphlet that was distributed to potential people at MTO, they took the Chatham guidelines and they forgot to omit "IMOS." That was a very simple mistake. For anyone to assume that it was a predetermined done deal is totally wrong.

## SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Your supposed strategic approach to dealing with violence against women is more like a $5-million package of Band-Aids that you're using to try and fix some of the damage that your own government has inflicted on women and children.

The Minister of Community and Social Services cuts funding to children's aid societies and cuts funding for counselling for children, so you put a few hundred thousand dollars into counselling and training CAS workers. The Attorney General has been unable to fix the mess in the legal aid plan, 80% of women are not able to get access to legal aid, so you put $300,000 more into what you call emergency legal advice. But you have not helped with front-line crisis services, and shelters are still trying to cope with fewer dollars and more demand.

The London centre, the shelter in your own home town, Minister, is turning away one woman in need of help for every woman it takes. The London Battered Women's Advocacy Centre has had a 195% increase in requests for service this year. Why have you not provided more support to abused women who need a safe refuge?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** In response to the question, I'd like to answer in this regard: We did listen over the past two years to the priorities of communities, individuals, victims of assault and certainly members of this Legislative Assembly with regard to the need to improve our violence against women initiatives.

We came forth with a comprehensive and coordinated strategy, a plan of action across nine ministries and 30 programs. This has not happened in this province. As a matter of fact, I'm shocked at the question from the member, because we have thrown some $100 million at programs that have not been planned, have not been coordinated, have not been evaluated, and we need to know that our programs in Ontario work. As a matter of fact, the NDP's Mr Silipo, in response to a question during his last six months as the minister, said to the shelters, "There will be no new money for shelters."

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, clearly you have not heard from the people who are involved in providing services to abused women and to their children that what they really need is help on the front lines, not more cuts. What you have not heard from them is that none of your Band-Aids deals with the overwhelming problems that your government's cuts have created for women who are trying to escape from abusive situations.

The director of the Battered Women's Advocacy Centre in London has said that the huge increase in calls they are getting is just the first reflection in the community of the government's massive cuts to social services, to welfare, to housing, to shelters, to counselling services.

You said this morning on television that you wanted to look at the problems of emergency shelters that are under stress. Surely you understand that women cannot leave these centres because there is no place for them to go and they cannot afford to live. When will your government start to repair the damage that has been done and create conditions where women and children can truly be safe because they can leave abusive situations?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** In looking at the violence against women initiatives across these nine ministries and the programs we offer in Ontario, which are far more extensive than any other province in Canada, we wanted to see how we could improve these programs, and we have responded.

With respect to the dollars the member has drawn to my attention, the former governments increased that program from $10 million to $100 million, as I have explained. There have been reductions, not in front-line services, but I will add that some of those reductions have been taken up by ministries through agencies other than shelters, and I will also add that the money we are providing right now is approximately $111.4 million, which is $11.4 million more, during very difficult times, than these two governments offered during their free-spending —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**1430**

## ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. You know that today we're here specifically to deal with one of the issues here, the road safety legislation. I find it passing strange that on the very day we're here to debate this bill at third reading, you as Minister of Transportation have moved to eliminate the strategic vehicle technology office and its commercial vehicles section. Those are the very people who are necessary to do the kind of research your ministry has to do to improve on truck safety.

How do you square, on the one hand, coming into this House today to try to pass truck safety legislation and, on the other hand, firing the very people within your own ministry who are responsible for improving on truck safety?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I believe the people of Ontario have asked this government

to do better for less and that's what this government is trying to do: better for less. I believe there are lots of people around the world from whom certain information or technology can be bought at a much better rate, and that is what this government is trying to do: give the people of Ontario that much better for less.

**Mr Bisson:** You don't do more with less when it comes to the question of road safety. You have to have the necessary budgets in place and the people within your ministry so that you, as Minister of Transportation, can take the responsibility you're charged with, the safety of Ontario roads. When you as minister stand in this House and say, "We're going to do more with less," how do you expect to have any credibility in front of the public when it comes to road safety?

I ask you again, how do you square, on the one hand, coming to this House today to pass road safety legislation, and then firing the very people within your ministry who are responsible for improving on truck safety here in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** It's always difficult to justify the dismissal or the surplusing of an individual or individuals, and I understand where the member is coming from, but we do have a responsibility to the people of Ontario to do better for less. We're not going to compromise safety. Safety will never be compromised by this government. I believe we are taking the initiatives that are going to make sure our roads are safe.

The member is referring to the possible surplusing of an individual who has made a contribution towards certain technology we're looking at and certain findings we could be looking at. We can buy that technology — it is available throughout the world and it is available throughout this province through the private sector — at a much cheaper price.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation as well on what is turning into the Al Palladini day. Minister, the maintenance of highways in a land as rugged and yet as beautiful of Ontario has long been a challenge for your ministry. I was interested to hear of a situation which has emerged on Highway 17 in the city of Kanata, which could impact the safety of motorists in this area. Could you please provide the House with the details of this problem?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I'd certainly like to thank the member for his longstanding concern with regard to road safety. I believe the member is referring to the beaver who built a beaver dam adjacent to Highway 17, east of Eagleson Road in Kanata. This dam has created a 30-square-metre pond right beside the highway, and the concern for my ministry is that an errant motorist could land in the pond, resulting in great personal harm or possibly drowning. This beaver has been, if you'll pardon the pun, very busy in the area for the past six years, and MTO practice has been to physically remove the dams. However, the beaver is very persistent and always rebuilds the dams. For safety reasons, we have considered a more permanent solution, such as using a trapper.

**Mr Chudleigh:** There was a great deal of concern expressed by the people of Kanata over the possible solution. I understand that difficult decisions must be made each day by the front-line workers of your ministry at the MTO.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Halton North, look this way. Member for Halton North, please sit down.

Okay: supplementary.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Sorry. I couldn't hear you with all the noise going on.

I understand that difficult decisions must be made every day by your front-line workers at the Ministry of Transportation who work to keep our roads safe throughout this great province. Could you please tell the House what course of action was taken in this unique case?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I am pleased to inform the House that the water level of the beaver pond has been reduced through natural means. Ministry staff have not taken any further action to date, but we are monitoring the situation to ensure that the water level does not increase dramatically.

I am also pleased to report that our district engineer, Bert Torini, visited the grade 2 class at Roland Michener public school in Kanata on June 19, and he informed the class, all of whom were naturally concerned for the safety of the beaver, that the beaver would not be trapped but relocated only if absolutely necessary. Mr Torini advised the children that we were considering the action because of the need to ensure the safety of the travelling public. I'm sure the children were glad to learn that this particular specimen of Canada's national animal lived to see another Canada Day.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** In the absence of the Minister of Health, my question is for the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance. On May 3, 1995, at Kapuskasing, Ontario, Mike Harris solemnly promised that if he became Premier of Ontario a Harris government was committed to protecting "24-hour emergency service in all northern and rural hospitals in Ontario." That was the promise in the 1995 election campaign. Mike Harris won the election; he formed a government.

Last Friday at Goderich, your Minister of Health announced a new small hospitals policy which did not commit to maintaining 24-hour emergency service in all northern and rural hospitals, but rather, promised only access to such service, perhaps 30, 40, 50 kilometres away from that community hospital.

Why did your government break the promise that Mike Harris made at Kapuskasing almost two years ago?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I would say, first of all, that I think the rural and northern health care policy laid out by the Minister of Health last week is an excellent one. It comes, as the member for Renfrew North well knows, from some consultation with people who have a great deal of expertise in delivering health care in rural and northern Ontario. I think the important part of the entire issue to which he refers is that care will be available to people in rural parts of the province. He would certainly understand, coming from the part of the province he does — I

know that every single institution in the province can't be all things to all people all the time. However, having said that, I do think that we owe it to the people of Ontario to have emergency care available, where practical, and as close to home as is possible.

**1440**

**Mr Conway:** It's very clear from that answer that the government's current policy — where practical, as close as possible — is a long way from the promise made at Kapuskasing in 1995.

My supplementary question to the Deputy Premier of this government is simply this: In communities like Arnprior, Barry's Bay, Deep River, Winchester and Petrolia, people are very concerned that under this new small hospitals policy their emergency departments are going to close or be substantially downsized and that many of the hospital-based patient services that communities like Arnprior, Barry's Bay and Deep River have enjoyed over the last number of years and decades will either be reduced or eliminated.

Will you commit today to people in communities like Arnprior, Deep River and Barry's Bay that they will not lose any of their patient-based, hospital-based services under your new policy?

**Hon Mr Eves:** We are the first government in 10 years to listen to the people of rural and northern Ontario. The two previous governments received no less than 26 reports on health care in rural and northern Ontario and did absolutely nothing about any one of the 26.

First of all, in December 1995, I might say to the honourable member, we invested some $13 million in emergency care in rural hospitals across Ontario. That is something that two previous administrations had not seen fit to do. The minister has now acted upon the recommendations of some very notable people with some real experience in rural and northern Ontario. I'm sure I don't have to go through the list for the honourable member. In fact, one of them is from your riding. I have the newspaper clipping, as indeed does he, lauding this person's ability in advising the government.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Eves:** We are taking the advice of the task force that the minister had advising him, so places like Deep River, Barry's Bay, Renfrew-Victoria, Arnprior, Red Lake —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. New question, third party.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, thank you very much.

## BY-ELECTION IN WINDSOR-RIVERSIDE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Since we're doing so well here, another question to the Deputy Premier. As you know, a by-election will need to be called in the constituency of Windsor-Riverside. You can imagine the surprise of people living in Windsor that just in the last few days this piece of propaganda turns up on their doorsteps, in the mail. If you read it, it's very clear that this is not a report to the riding or anything like that. This is strictly political propaganda. This is propaganda being put out. In fact, what your government's doing, you're using taxpayers' money to in effect put a political leaflet out there before the election is called. Can you tell us how much taxpayers' money you spent putting this piece of political propaganda out there?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** No, I'm not familiar with that pamphlet that the leader of the third party refers to. If he'd be kind enough to send it across, I'd be pleased to look into the matter for him.

**Mr Hampton:** I'll be very happy to send this over. In fact, if someone wants to take it over for the Deputy Premier, he can have a look at it. My point is this: Instead of using taxpayers' money to fund your election campaign, why don't you call the by-election so the Conservative Party can pay the costs of your candidate and pay the costs of your propaganda?

**Hon Mr Eves:** As I said, I'm not familiar with the pamphlet he's talking about. He knows of course, as does every member of the Legislature, that by-elections have to be called within a certain length of time and I'm sure that it will be at the appropriate time.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Yesterday was a historic day for the province of Ontario as the government launched Agenda for Action on the prevention of violence against women. I'd like to commend all those who have been involved in this, especially the minister responsible for women's issues and the Attorney General.

In my riding of Perth, violence against women has been a standing concern. Local initiatives have set a high standard for education and prevention, and I know this new strategic direction will greatly assist our communities in their ability to respond to violence against women.

As the new proposal states, the prevention of violence is everybody's responsibility. A particular prevalent problem and an area of concern to my constituents is the incidence of sexual assault. I'd like to know what actions the minister is taking through this initiative to deal with the serious issue of sexual assault.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** For the first time ever in the history of the province we are extending to rape crisis centres annualized funding. I would add that this is on the back of an NDP government that in 1995 reduced the funding to rape crisis centres by 4.8%.

The second piece I would like to extend to the member for Perth is that we're looking at the needs of disabled and francophone women and looking at models that will assist them in providing the kinds of services they need and deserve.

Third, we have put aside an amount of funding to help to close the service gaps in communities, both to rape crisis centres and to shelters.

Thank you for your question.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** I'm sure my constituents will be as pleased as I am to hear about our government addressing the needs of sexual assault victims. Through the efforts of groups such as the Perth domestic abuse review team,

my riding has experienced great success in dealing with domestic violence through the courts. I'm proud to say that successful prosecutions have risen from 50% to 80%. A key element of justice, however, is proper treatment for perpetrators to ensure they do not reoffend.

My constituents would like to know whether yesterday's announcement includes initiatives which will address the need for treatment programs for batterers.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Currently my colleague the Solicitor General oversees some 28 male batterer programs for convicted perpetrators. In the Agenda for Action we are providing a quarter of a million dollars this year to clear out the backlog in these programs. With the expansion of the domestic courts to six new sites, we're expanding the male batterer programs based on the highly successful model that we have in the North York court. By pleading guilty here, a perpetrator will go directly into a counselling program and hopefully this will assist in breaking the cycle of violence.

We must ensure that our justice system is responsive, and although the member opposite from Thunder Bay stated that every woman doesn't want to go to court, she's quite right. That's why I think the North York court is a good model, because in the end families have an opportunity to be together.

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Today you intend to pass your comprehensive road safety bill, and your idea to protect the 810,000 children who ride school buses in Ontario daily is to double the existing fine levels. This gesture is meaningless, Minister. You cannot get a conviction under the current law. Vehicle liability is the only mechanism that will gain convictions.

You have allowed Mr Froese's bill to be incorporated into Bill 138. Any recognition that school bus safety must be addressed is good. I urge you, on behalf of the children, to address the problem, which has caused 11 deaths and 80 injuries over the past 10 years. There are no fatalities associated with Mr Froese's bill. When will you introduce vehicle liability to protect Ontario's school children?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** As I promised the member, the ministry has looked at how we could incorporate his bill into a road safety bill, and it was because of the member that we actually incorporated the higher fines. But for the member to push the issue of absolute vehicle liability — we have believed in the past that you have to target the driver, not the vehicle. We're trying to do what's right.

One other thing I want to say to the member is that I believe we have a police authority out there that acts as a police authority, and for this government to give police-type powers to bus drivers, I don't think the people of Ontario would like that very much.

**1450**

**Mr Hoy:** Bus drivers currently, if they can identify the driver of a vehicle, lay a charge, so they already have some of those powers you're saying you don't want to give to them. I'm here to support Bill 138 because it involves safety issues. I want you to quit stalling. Bill 78 has the unanimous consent of this House and was referred to the standing committee on resources development. Bill 78 has a right to be considered. Is this a democratic government or not?

School bus experts, legal experts and parents want to tell you why vehicle liability is a necessity. It's fair and it's enforceable. When is the government going to allow Bill 78 to be heard before that committee?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I think the member has answered his own question of why we cannot give bus drivers police-type authority. We have something already in place, that if a bus driver can identify the driver, there will be a conviction. Again, I want to say to the member, we are not going to arbitrarily give bus drivers the powers or the authority just to jot down licence numbers and have a conviction based on what licence number they perceive to have seen.

We are working with the school busing industry to see how we can better implement some additional changes that will tighten it, that will protect our children. These things are going to happen, but they're going to take some time. I would welcome the member's input and help on this to see how we can work together.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I'm sending over a copy of a letter to the Minister of Education and Training. This letter is addressed to a number of officials of the ministry from the superintendent of the Toronto Board of Education regarding section 27 agreements at the Toronto board.

Despite the cuts to social assistance to poor families, to child care and to school classrooms, this government is trying to persuade the public that they really care about Ontario children. The Attorney General and the minister responsible for women's issues announced new funding for school boards and to children's aid societies to deal with violence against women. Today, the Minister of Community and Social Services said, "Children are a priority of this government."

If that's the case, could the Minister of Education and Training explain why his ministry would be telling the Toronto Board of Education to make cuts to its section 27 classrooms, which are classrooms with education programs serving the most fragile, at-risk children in Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** The member for Algoma has sent me over a copy of this letter. I have had 30 seconds or so to review it — the member for Algoma smiles because he knows I probably reviewed some of it in that 30 seconds or so — and I see no evidence here that the ministry has asked anyone to close down a section 27 program. For those who don't understand section 27 programs, those are programs that are delivered to young people who are in institutions, who are not well, other people in that regard. I see no indication here that the ministry has asked the Toronto Board of Education to do that.

Further to that, two weeks ago, when asked a similar question about the Ottawa school board section 27

agreements, I said in this House and I said publicly on several occasions that this government will not allow any student who needs those services that are covered under section 27 to be denied those services. That includes Toronto and Ottawa.

**Mr Wildman:** The letter is about four pages of lists of proposed cuts by the ministry to the in-place programs of the Toronto Board of Education. The superintendent who wrote the letter said, "I'm writing on behalf of the Toronto board to request that the ministry reconsider its proposed program closures."

Your ministry has told the board to make cuts in education programs for young mothers at Jessie's; for extremely mentally fragile children at Youthdale Treatment Centre, where there is a 12- to 18-month waiting list already for school programs; for young people moving out of residential psychiatric programs at the Hincks Treatment Centre, and your ministry has given no rationale for these cuts.

As the letter indicates, these programs continue to offer a valuable service in terms of public education for some of our most challenged young people. It doesn't make any sense. Is a child in care or treatment no longer entitled to public education, like every other child in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** It's surprising to me that the member for Algoma would raise this issue today because as I look at this letter, I believe if the member investigated further, he would find that the Toronto Board of Education was asked by his government to make some permanent reductions in its costs through the social contract. It's been left to this government to bring those programs forward. He will know that his government negotiated, as part of the way of recovering those social contract savings from the Toronto Board of Education, transfers into the Toronto board, into the section 27 schools and transfers between school boards that receive grants and don't receive grants — part of the social contract program. I strongly suspect that what's in this letter is about programs that were originally talked about under the social contract, which was your government. The member for Algoma knows it was your government, not this government, that initiated that.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Our government has a strong commitment to ensuring that our workplaces are among the safest in the world. Along with that commitment comes a commitment to occupational health and safety research. I believe that one of the keys to ensuring those healthy, safe workplaces would be looking at various areas of research into the causes and complications of workplace injury and illness. Could the minister outline for us what improvements will be made in this field as a direct result of Bill 99, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** To the member for Hamilton West, I'm certainly very pleased to respond as to the impact that Bill 99 is going to have on health and safety research because for the first time in this province the Workers' Compensation Board will now have the opportunity to focus exclusively on health and safety, which it never had before. It was never part of the purpose clause. I'm also extremely pleased to indicate that the WCB has set up a task force on research and I'm looking forward to the results of the task force over the next few months.

**Mrs Ross:** I'm sure that all members would agree that any improvements we can make to the occupational health and safety research system have to be good news. Could the minister please outline for this House what the basis of the new strategy is likely to be.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I need to add that we've not been happy with the record of previous governments when it comes to health and safety research, so the task force on research will be recommending that by the year 2000 we will be spending in this province an additional $7.7 million on top of the $5 million that we already spend. We're going to be focusing on taking a look at occupational disease, ergonomics; we're going to look at diagnosis, treatment; and we're going to find some very practical solutions for health and safety which we can share with workplaces across the province in order that we can actually see a reduction in injury and illness.

**1500**

## RED HILL CREEK EXPRESSWAY

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. During the election campaign and shortly after the campaign, when you were elected, your Premier committed to full funding for the north-south portion of the Red Hill Creek Expressway in Hamilton. Following that commitment there has been some debate. In questioning in the Legislature, a year ago I asked you to agree to an independent review of the funding costs because there was a disagreement between what the region believed was the provincial responsibility and what you stated it was. The independent review has now been completed and it shows a $44-million shortfall between what you have committed for the Red Hill Creek Expressway and what the consultant and the independent review has now shown is needed from the provincial commitment. Therefore, we now have a gap of $44 million.

Will you today commit to the additional $44 million that the independent consultant review has shown is the cost the province has to bring forward for the north-south portion of the Red Hill Creek Expressway to go ahead?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** The province obviously remains committed to the expressway and the contribution we committed to was $100 million towards the building of the expressway.

However, discussions have taken place with the regional chair and my staff, including myself, to see how we can find savings, ways to build the expressway in a most cost-efficient way. That has been ongoing, and I believe there has been some RFQ given to the point where the differential is not $44 million, as the honourable member has mentioned. I believe the price is very close to what we said all along: between $200 million and $205 million. I think we have an agreement based on

what it is going to cost to complete Red Hill Creek between the ministry and the region of Hamilton-Wentworth. Negotiations are ongoing.

**Mr Agostino:** I have a letter dated June 24, 1997, sent to you by the regional chairman. You keep disputing the figures. You keep disputing the facts. A year ago you bragged about the fact that your $100-million figure was correct and the region's was wrong.

Let me state to you what the regional chairman has said: "Again, this support results in a shortfall in the current proposal in the amount of $43.8 million compared to the previous arrangement." This is June 24; a week ago this letter was sent to you telling you clearly it's a shortfall of $44 million.

When the people of Hamilton-Wentworth believed your Premier when he said he was going to fully fund the north-south portion of the expressway, it meant they were going to live up to their word and their commitment. You have changed the funding formula, you have shortchanged the region by $44 million, and people in the region are questioning your government's commitment to that promise made by the Premier. Your inability today to come forward and commit to the rest of the money is putting the expressway project in jeopardy.

Minister, based on the independent review that you agreed to, will you bring the $44-million cheque to the region of Hamilton-Wentworth so we can go ahead and start the north-south expressway?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** This is coming from a member who was opposed to building Red Hill Creek Expressway. I am glad to see that he is now on side, and finally. We're on side; we want to build it. We've been saying it all along.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** That is simply not true.

**Mr Agostino:** Point of order —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Hold it. First off, let's get this straight. The member for Fort William, that's out of order, and to the member for Hamilton East, that's out of order. You have to withdraw those comments.

**Mrs McLeod:** I'll withdraw the second one, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** No, I just want to hear a withdrawal, that's all.

**Mrs McLeod:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Now, you want a point of order?

**Mr Agostino:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Clearly that comment by the minister was inappropriate. He knows those are not the facts and I really believe you should ask him to withdraw that. I believe he is misleading the House by suggesting I'm opposed to the expressway.

**The Speaker:** Now you have to withdraw that comment. You can't accuse somebody of misleading the House. It's against the rules.

**Mr Agostino:** I'll withdraw it if you can ask him to do the same.

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of order. Minister?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Mr Speaker, I will send the honourable member a copy of a newspaper article with his picture on it that basically said exactly what I said earlier.

We are committed to building Red Hill Creek Expressway and there are negotiations going on right now with the regional chair and my staff. I believe we are working towards a meeting date, which is probably going to happen some time next week. I am glad to see the member is on side to get Red Hill Creek built.

## PETITIONS

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition that reads as follows, and it is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We believe that the heart of education in our province is the relationship between student and teacher and that this human and relational dimension should be maintained and extended in any proposed reform. As Minister of Education and Training, you should know how strongly we oppose many of the secondary school reform recommendations being proposed by your ministry and government.

"We recognize and support the need to review secondary education in Ontario. The proposal for reform as put forward by your ministry, however, is substantially flawed in several key areas: (a) reduced instructional time, (b) reduction of instruction in English, (c) a reduction in qualified teaching personnel, (d) academic work experience credit not linked to educational curriculum, and (e) devaluation of formal education.

"We strongly urge your ministry to delay the implementation of secondary school reform so that all interested stakeholders — parents, students, school councils, trustees and teachers — are able to participate in a more meaningful consultation process which will help ensure that a high quality of publicly funded education is provided."

I affix my signature.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions signed by members of the Ontario Federation of Labour and forwarded to me by the president of the OFL, Gord Wilson.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government's contribution to prevention services made through the WCB has been reduced from $62 million to $47 million, with no explanation as to where this money has gone; and

"Whereas the prevention services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other safety associations, thereby increasing the demand for the prevention services provided by the centre; and

"Whereas this government has gutted the certification training standards for health and safety committee members and is replacing them with minimalist perform-

ance standards which, in combination with funding cuts, have resulted in a 40% reduction in the staff of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre is facing further cuts of $2.3 million to finance the establishment of several new employer safety associations, thereby duplicating administrative costs and services;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the gutting of the funding of prevention services provided by the Workers' Health and Safety Centre.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the moneys taken from the health and safety prevention services of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the other safety associations be returned to them."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the legislative authority to restrict going topless in public places; and

"Whereas sections 173 and 174 of the Criminal Code relating to public nudity be clarified to provide better protection of community standards;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to clarify legislation on going topless in public places."

I endorse this petition with my signature.

## NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature to it.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions signed by members of the Canadian Auto Workers union and forwarded to me by Buzz Hargrove, their national president.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workers' health and safety must be protected in the province of Ontario, especially the right to refuse work which is likely to endanger a worker, the right to know about workplace hazards and the right to participate in joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations help protect workers' health and safety and workers' rights in this area; and

"Whereas the government's discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act threatens workers' health and safety by proposing to deregulate the existing act and regulations to reduce or eliminate workers' health and safety rights and to reduce enforcement of health and safety laws by the Ministry of Labour; and

"Whereas workers must have a full opportunity to be heard about this proposed drastic erosion in their present protections from injuries and occupational diseases;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the present provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that public hearings on the discussion paper be held in at least 20 communities throughout Ontario."

Again, that's a lot more than the few crummy days they've offered us on the WCB. I add my name to these workers.

**1510**

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas communities strongly disagree with allowing women to go topless in public;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To enact legislation to require women to wear tops in public places for the protection of our children and for public safety in general."

This is signed by about 200 people in my riding, and I sign it to present it to this Legislature.

## KIDNEY DIALYSIS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition that has been signed by over 300 residents of Cornwall and area. Most of these signatures were collected by Mrs Eileen Harris, 81-year-old president of the residents' council of Glen-Stor-Dun Lodge. Mrs Harris sat at the door of the lodge for over two weeks getting this petition signed.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is no dialysis available in the Cornwall area; and

"Whereas the lack of local medical treatment forces dialysis patients throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and beyond to drive to Kingston and Ottawa several times each week, in dangerous weather conditions, to

receive this basic medical attention, incurring unnecessary stress, cost and inconvenience; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health promised last April to rectify this by establishing a dialysis treatment facility in Cornwall; and

"Whereas this promise made by the Minister of Health to date has not been kept, resulting in local patients and their families and friends continuing to drive to Ottawa or Kingston for treatment several times a week during the abovenoted conditions;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Minister of Health to follow through on his commitment made last April to bring the long-awaited and much-needed health service to Cornwall area residents."

I will also sign the petition.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINICS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of OPSEU and forwarded to me by their president, Leah Casselman.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) provides high-quality professional medical, hygiene and ergonomic services to employers, workers, joint health and safety committees and their communities; and

"Whereas the professional services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to organizations such as the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, therefore increasing the demand for the services provided by OHCOW; and

"Whereas the professional and technical expertise and advice provided by the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers have made a significant contribution to improvements to workplace health and safety as well as the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call upon the government to maintain the funding of the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers and oppose any attempt to alter the governance structure or erode the professional and technical services of OHCOW.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that OHCOW be provided with the necessary funds to allow expansion into other Ontario communities in order to provide the professional and technical services needed to reduce occupational injuries, illnesses and deaths."

I proudly add my name to theirs.

## WATER CHLORINATION

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the chemical substance chlorine was added to the people of Milton's pure well water supplies in 1995; and

"Whereas the Halton regional water delivery system in the town of Milton has received the regular maintenance and standard upgrade requirements outlined by the province and is supported by a standby chlorination unit sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat; and

"Whereas recent studies on the use of chlorine additives in drinking water have raised the spectre of chlorine as a possible cancer agent; and

"Whereas the people of the town of Milton overwhelmingly supported the belief that a standby chlorination requirement is sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature grant the people of Milton's request for a variance allowing only standby chlorination to be used in treating the pure well water supplies of Milton's water delivery system."

I'm proud to add my name to this petition.

## MANDATORY INQUESTS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition was forwarded to me from my good friends at the United Steelworkers of America, Local 6500, in Sudbury.

"To the Honourable Solicitor General and Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario has decided to scrap mandatory inquests as a result of fatalities in the mining and construction industry; and

"Whereas this unprecedented and callous decision sets workplace safety back 20 years;

"We, the undersigned, request that Solicitor General Bob Runciman, on behalf of all workers in the mining and construction industry, reverse his decision to remove mandatory inquests from the Coroners Act of Ontario."

Again I sign my signature to this petition, as I am in full agreement with it.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have further petitions regarding workplace health and safety, this time from members of CUPE forwarded to me by their Ontario president Sid Ryan.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and in the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and

that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I proudly add my name to theirs.

## RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I continue to receive petitions concerning rural health care from my riding and other rural areas in Ontario.

"Whereas there is urgent concern about the future of community hospitals located in Dunnville, Hagersville, Simcoe and Tillsonburg; and

"Whereas distance, weather and doctor shortages are serious barriers to people in rural areas accessing emergency services and health care; and

"Whereas local communities have worked for years to establish, maintain, improve and modernize hospital, physician and other health services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt a rural health policy to deal with these problems and to protect the health care rights of rural communities, and that hospital boards, district health councils, the Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission and the government of Ontario adhere to this rural policy."

I am in agreement with these petitions and therefore affix my signature to them.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I would be prepared to affix my signature to the last petitions as well, but I have another petition. It reads as follows: "A petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature.

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors;

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I am in full agreement with its contents.

# REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I beg leave to present the final report on referenda of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**1520**

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## COMPREHENSIVE ROAD SAFETY ACT, 1997
## LOI DE 1997 SUR UN ENSEMBLE COMPLET DE MESURES VISANT LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Mr Palladini moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act to promote road safety by increasing periods of suspension for Criminal Code convictions, impounding vehicles of suspended drivers, requiring treatment for impaired drivers, raising fines for driving while suspended, impounding critically defective commercial vehicles, creating an absolute liability offence for wheel separations, raising fines for passing stopped school buses, streamlining accident reporting requirements and amending other road safety programs / Projet de loi 138, Loi visant à favoriser la sécurité routière en augmentant les périodes de suspension pour les déclarations de culpabilité découlant du Code criminel, en mettant en fourrière les véhicules de conducteurs faisant l'objet d'une suspension, en exigeant le traitement des conducteurs en état d'ébriété, en augmentant les amendes pour conduite pendant que son permis est suspendu, en mettant en fourrière les véhicules utilitaires comportant des défauts critiques, en créant une infraction entraînant la responsabilité absolue en cas de détachement des roues, en augmentant les amendes pour dépassement d'un autobus scolaire arrêté, en simplifiant les exigences relatives à la déclaration des accidents et en modifiant d'autres programmes de sécurité routière.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I seek unanimous consent that my time be split with the member for Mississauga South.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Four weeks ago, June 5, we were here for second reading of the Comprehensive Road Safety Act, 1997, a bill that targets some of the worst offenders on our roads. Since then we have gone to the standing committee on social development and we have

heard from the public, giving them their opportunity to have their say about the bill.

I am pleased that we are now in a position to proceed with this much-needed legislation. What makes this bill so powerful is the support it has from organizations such as the Canadian Automobile Association, the Canadian Industrial Transportation League, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Ontario Medical Association, the Addiction Research Foundation, the general public and even CRASH. I have also heard rumours that the opposition are going to be in favour of this bill.

I appreciate that most of these groups made suggestions on how we could improve the bill. In our efforts on road safety, we are listening and we will keep those good ideas in mind as we implement and come forward with more road safety initiatives in the future. I assure you we will.

Everyone wants the same thing: safer roads. With this legislation we will do that by targeting drinking drivers, suspended drivers, unsafe trucking companies and people who pass stopped school buses.

We are addressing the problem of drinking drivers by providing mandatory education and/or treatment programs that will be paid for by the offender, not the taxpayers. In addition, new fines for driving while suspended will come into effect. They will start at $5,000 and can go as high as $50,000. Fines for a repeat offender will start at $10,000.

Minimum fines for driving while suspended for non-Criminal-Code offences will be doubled, and $2,000 on a second offence. Fines for driving while suspended for Criminal Code offences will range from $5,000 to $50,000. Drinking and driving offences will be kept on a record for a minimum of 10 years, up from five.

We are addressing the problem of repeat offenders. Second-time offenders will be suspended for three years, up from two. A third-time offender must have ignition interlock installed and successfully complete a remedial treatment program. Fourth-time offenders will never get a driver's licence in the province of Ontario ever again.

We are addressing the problem of people who choose to drive while under a Criminal Code suspension. If caught, the vehicle they are driving will be impounded for 45 days. The impoundment period doubles to 90 days if any vehicle owned by that same person is caught being driven a second time by a suspended driver. The impoundment period jumps to 180 days for a third offence.

This is the toughest drinking and driving package in Canada, and will go a long way in reducing the number of collisions, the number of deaths and the uncountable tears that have been caused by an impaired driver.

I think everyone in this House would agree that we could not have come this far without the inspiration and encouragement of the member for Mississauga South, who has made this issue her personal mission for many years. Thank you, Margaret. I know this is a proud day for her. At the same time, I also know she is far from finished with this issue and will keep fighting until drinking and driving is ended in Ontario.

With this legislation we will target unsafe trucks. Ontario will become the first jurisdiction in North America to impound unsafe trucks for a critical defect for 15 days. I've returned with the Wheel Safety Act, which makes wheel separation an absolute liability offence with fines that range from $2,000 to $50,000, the highest in North America.

We are focusing on school bus safety. Anyone caught passing a school bus will face fines that have doubled to a maximum of $2,000 on a first offence and $4,000 on a second or subsequent offence. This initiative was inspired by the member for Essex-Kent and his private member's bill. I congratulate him again on his efforts.

Thanks to the member for St Catharines-Brock, we have taken school bus safety one step further by requiring school buses to stop at all railway crossings. I also congratulate him on his private member's bill.

I am glad we've had the opportunity to incorporate two good ideas from private members into this legislation.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility. I thank the members of this House for their support and for the speedy passage of this bill. This could not have happened without their cooperation, and I want to thank them very, very much.

With this legislation we will be removing some of the worst offenders from our roads, and that will result in a reduction in the number of collisions and deaths on our highways. That is exactly what we set out to do when we first unveiled Ontario's plan for road safety back in October 1995.

I would like again to thank all the members of this Legislature for sharing this particular day and making this bill a reality.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** This is a very special day in my service for the last 12 years in this Legislature. It wouldn't have happened that we would all be here today to vote unanimously in support of Bill 138 without Minister of Transportation Al Palladini's shared commitment to supporting the initiatives to stop the killing on our roads.

For me it's been almost four years in coming. Obviously I'm full of gratitude and appreciation today that we are finally going to pass Bill 138, which incorporates all of the intent of my first private member's bill, which was introduced in this House in the fall of 1994, and then I reintroduced the same bill with a few minor changes in the spring of 1996.

Having travelled this province and done a great number of open-line radio shows and television shows across the province, I've been able to get a tremendous amount of feedback from the general public about what they really feel about people who knowingly drink and then knowingly drive. This bill isn't about criticizing people who choose to drink; that's a private, individual choice. But it's very much a bill about people who, having drunk, then knowingly drive, because that's no longer a private affair. When drunk drivers take to our roads and streets and highways, it becomes immediately a public issue and a public responsibility.

**1530**

I'm very proud of Mr Palladini having the courage and the conviction to bring forward this very tough legislation. Frankly, there were times when I was bringing forward my private member's bill dealing with the

subject that some of these measures which we are about to vote on unanimously today I was discouraged from incorporating in my private bill. I was told: "You'll never get all-party support. It's too stiff. It's too tough. It just goes too far." Fortunately, it obviously doesn't go too far, because everyone in this chamber agrees it's what we need at this point.

The interesting thing about the subject of drunk driving I think is that in the overall incidence of drunk driving in the last decade we have had a decline, but we have had an increase in the number of those people who drive drunk more than once. So it is the repeat convictions that we are going to try to deter and eventually stop completely with this kind of legislation.

When we introduced the legislation last — well, it was proclaimed on November 28 last year, which was one part of my bill, the administrative driver's licence suspension, the automatic suspension on being charged: not on being convicted, but on being charged with impaired driving. The amazing thing is we've had now over 10,000 people, just from last November, charged with impaired driving and their licence being automatically suspended for 90 days.

I think what that tells us is that we have, at any time in this province, far, far too many people who drive drunk, because to have stopped, arrested and charged over 10,000 people tells you the amount of police, the deployment of personnel it has taken to accomplish that. What that really tells us is that this is a far bigger problem than we ever really know because we simply don't have the police personnel to do all the RIDE program inspections that we could do and have even greater numbers of charges.

Today is a victory for everyone in this chamber who is going to get an opportunity to vote for Bill 138, but indeed it's a far greater victory for those families who have lost loved ones to the drunk driver. Even recently, just this past holiday weekend, three more people were killed in this province in the last three days by drunk drivers. This bill will go a long, long way, as I said, to stop the killing.

When we talk about drunk driving, that's what we do: We usually talk about fatalities. We don't talk about the families for whom lives are changed permanently, for the rest of their lives, people who are put in wheelchairs, people who lose their opportunity to earn a living because they can no longer physically manoeuvre their torn, ravaged bodies from the injuries sustained from drunk driving.

As I stand today, as I say, it's a tremendous privilege to speak on behalf of all those families for whom the subject of drunk driving means one word in their lives, and that word is "horror." For one of those families, the mother is here this afternoon. In her case, the drunk driving was never proven about the person who killed her son. In fact, that driver was never even charged with drunk driving in that particular incident. But in that particular woman's driving history, there was no question she had already killed someone else; she had put someone else in a wheelchair for life. And in an accident which she caused — and she was charged I think only with dangerous driving in the end — she killed Warren Lavery.

I'm very grateful that Mrs Janetta Lavery has the courage to be here today because I'm only the person who's had the privilege of trying to resolve this issue, at least partway, for all those families. We simply hope and pray that with the passage of this legislation today we will be able to reduce the number of deaths, the number of people who are injured, and hopefully in the long run help those people who still don't understand that not only is drunk driving a Criminal Code offence, but they have a huge responsibility. If they don't have responsibility to themselves, they have a huge responsibility to the rest of society.

On behalf of all those families who have hoped always there would be tougher legislation in this Legislature and in this province, I'm very grateful to everyone who will be supporting this bill today. As I say, it's certainly the most meaningful thing that's ever happened in my 24 years in politics to have my private member's bill on this subject incorporated in the government bill. I feel very strongly about the fact that we are all on the right track and we are all doing this together. It's not one individual; it's not even just one government. It's been coming for a long time, and now we're going to have the toughest legislation in Canada and it will be among some of the toughest legislation in North America.

I thank everybody from the bottom of my heart.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I will be sharing my time with the member for Renfrew North and the member for St Catharines.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Mr Duncan:** Indeed it is good to be here today passing this bill at long last. Before I get into the substance of the bill, I'd like to comment about the process that's happened here.

We had our first truck safety bill in February, a bill that was, according to the minister, tough, and he was going to get tough on trucks. He said they wanted to pass that bill right away. Day after day went by and the bill wasn't passed. Then, lo and behold, the Premier said, and was quoted as saying, the bill was too draconian and we would do a more comprehensive bill in the fall. Public reaction was swift and furious that despite its commitments, despite the fact that it had a bill on the order paper, the government was backing off.

No one could quite understand why, least of all the families of a number of victims of flying truck wheels. Had it not been for their passion and their ferocity, I doubt very much that we'd be standing here today. I don't discount the government's desire to do a bill, but I suspect it would have been much later and would have needed even more improvements than we believe it needs today.

We could have passed this bill last Thursday. We could have done it, just as we're doing it today. Instead, a government that is intent on changing the rules of the Legislature insisted on bringing us back here at a cost of about $2 million. Those were the numbers the government members were throwing out in other debates. This

government could have done it last Thursday, but instead, two million bucks, just like that.

I must tell you that it is good to see the government House leader and the Minister of Transportation bonding again, because obviously they had quite a falling out last week. Why? Because the Minister of Transportation saw the folly in it himself of not doing this last Thursday, instead racking up a bill of $2 million so that the government could jam its new rules through this House and effectively curtail democracy in the Legislature. It's a shame that the government doesn't apply to itself the same standards it applies to everybody else: $2 million, poof, gone like that. Why? Because the government House leader, in a fit of pique, would not bring forward this bill, much to the chagrin of the Minister of Transportation.

**1540**

But we on this side of the House understand full well why: because this government's priority is shutting down debate. It's not about truck safety, it's not about ensuring that we deal with matters expeditiously, because had they really meant that, we wouldn't be here today. We would have done the truck safety bill. Instead, the members opposite prefer to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars so they can stifle debate.

It's absolutely shameless that government ministers like the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing would laugh about $2 million. I suppose we have to discuss his ethical dilemma later today, so I imagine in that regard it's probably money well spent. I say to the government members that you have argued in the past about how much it costs to run this place when we want to debate something, but I'll tell you, when you don't want to talk about something, it's easy to shut it down. That's what your rules were all about and that's why it's a shame that this bill had to wait till today. I could understand why the Minister of Transportation was visibly and publicly angered last week, because we believe he is genuine in his commitment. We saw that minister go through the trial and tribulation of having first the Premier cut the legs out from under him and then the government House leader.

But here we are back today, and now I'd like to turn my attention to a bill we will support. As I said in committee hearings, we support it recognizing that on a scale of 1 to 10, this bill is probably a 7.5. But we proposed a number of amendments to the bill and I'd like to remind the government of those amendments, and I'd like to remind the public that this bill, while it's an important first step particularly in the area of drunk driving — in fact it's probably a giant step in the area of drunk driving — there are a lot of things missing from the bill.

For instance, the official opposition made a motion that an advisory board with a sunset clause be appointed to oversee the implementation of all the recommendations in Target '97. What did the government do? Voted it down. It would have been very easy to do. It would have given the public assurance that those recommendations, that those regulatory changes that need to be implemented to deal with the broad range of safety issues, actually happen. I say to the minister and to the government members that we will be watching, we will be following, and every time you fail to move expeditiously, we will remind you and remind the public that you have not yet dealt with the vast majority of recommendations that come out of both Target '97 and the Worona inquest.

The members of the government also had a chance to pass an amendment to this bill which would have brought Ontario's road safety standards and the parameters around those standards in closer sync with other provinces and the national government. The government has argued that this is the toughest bill. In terms of drunk driving, they're accurate. In terms of road safety, we're on the way. But it won't be the toughest until we do the regulatory changes, and those do not require the consent of the Legislature through a bill to do.

We gave the government an opportunity to pass an amendment to the bill that would see the government no longer do business with companies with bad safety records. The government refused to pass that amendment, and we hope that future bills will include that. In fact, we will bring those amendments forward in two years and we will strengthen the Highway Traffic Act to make it better, to make it stronger, to raise this bill from a 7 or a 7.5 out of 10 to a 10 out of 10.

We talked about a graduated licensing system. We in committee, I think on all sides of the House, were surprised to learn how relatively easy it is to get a licence to drive one of those large carrier trucks. I think we were all surprised by that. We brought forward amendments to this bill that were ruled out of order because they deal with another bill. We say that had the government really been intent on comprehensive legislation, we could have dealt with that aspect of road safety as well.

We talked a great deal about the time periods for reinstatement of licence suspensions for drunk driving. We proposed a slightly tougher version in terms of the lockout devices, in terms of the suspensions, in terms of when licences could be renewed, and the government in turn defeated those.

There were a number of issues, a number of items left out of this bill that would have made it in our view a stronger bill, that would have made it in our view the kind of bill that would not require us in two years — and we will reopen this in two years — to have to go back and make more amendments.

There were a number of other less significant amendments that the official opposition proposed and we did so in good faith.

With respect to bus safety, I think the role of my colleague the member for Essex-Kent, Mr Hoy, was noted by the minister, and I want to pay tribute to him especially, but I'd also like to point out to the minister who referenced Mr Hoy's bill that you only got it half right. You've got the fines in it but you didn't deal with the key issue, the essential issue of liability, the same type of vehicular liability we see in other Ontario statutes, as was so well pointed out by my colleague from Essex-Kent.

We have here a bill, a piece of legislation that will contribute to improved road safety. It's a shame that we couldn't do it last week. It's a shame that we had to call the House back at considerable expense to taxpayers

because the government saw as a greater priority the need to deal with rule changes in the Legislature. There are members opposite who probably feel that they'd rather deal with rule changes, they'd rather have less debate. They're not interested in talking about issues. We wanted to talk about Bill 138 last week, they wouldn't, but here we are today prepared to support this bill, the first time I believe the official opposition supported a government bill.

We're glad for the families that forced the government to deal with this; we're glad that the confusion is ending. We're sorry that these provisions weren't in place last week, we're sorry it took all kinds of prodding, we're sorry that the minister had to endure what he endured both from his Premier and then his House leader, but we think it's time to get on with it. We'll be voting for this bill, and when we get the chance in two years we'll strengthen it so that road safety truly is the strongest it can be in Ontario and stronger than it is anywhere in North America.

**1550**

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I rise today to support Bill 138, the Comprehensive Road Safety Act. I'd like to make some observations in that connection. I share with my colleague from Windsor some of the concerns about what's not in the bill because there was a great deal of testimony offered at the standing committee which, as my colleague Mr Duncan has just indicated, is not reflected in this particular piece of legislation. But as Mrs Marland indicated in her remarks, there is I believe unanimous support for the bill as presented. It will remain for later days, I suppose, to improve upon Bill 138, to make the necessary amendments to improve what is clearly not a perfect piece of government legislation.

On the drinking and driving aspect, who could be opposed? I know only too well from personal experience in my own family about the tragedies involved with drinking and driving, I'm sorry to say on both sides of that equation. I have a first cousin who is brain-injured today because of a terrible accident up in Haliburton 10 years ago where, as I recall, it was a drunk driver who hit and killed two students. My cousin was not killed but will go through the rest of her life very seriously impaired as a result of that accident.

You can't have been around this Legislature as long as I have and not have some understanding of the problems and the pressures associated with drunk driving. For as long as I've been here it's been a concern. Continuously we have talked and we have legislated and we have increased the penalties. We're doing so again in Bill 138. I support that.

In supporting it, I'm under no illusions about the frailty of humankind. It is really distressing to me that some people today still don't get the message. I hope the substantially increased sanctions in Bill 138 get through to those people.

We have made a great deal of progress. I grew up in rural eastern Ontario in the 1960s. I don't want to tell you about just how bad it was. We've come a long way. For that, a lot of people — educators, politicians, police forces, parents, everybody — can take their share of the credit. We have made very substantial progress.

Just how much work is yet to be done can be tragically told today on the basis of an incredible, a grotesque incident that occurred in my part of eastern Ontario on the weekend, and I'm sorry the Solicitor General is not here.

A wonderful young man whom I did not know but who is a constituent of my colleague the member for Cornwall, David Primeau by name, 31 years of age, married, one child and a wife who is about to deliver their second child; I think the child has now been born. David Primeau wanted to be a police officer, and for reasons I can't recall wasn't able to do so, but was as of last weekend employed as a civilian with the Brockville police department.

Last Friday he was working on a drunk driving abatement program, a public information program, at the Riverfest in Brockville. He left; he went home. He lives just west of Cornwall. Later that day, Friday, he was hit and killed instantly while on his bicycle by someone who, according to the Brockville and the Cornwall papers — I've got the Cornwall Standard-Freeholder in front of me. The report in the Standard-Freeholder is that the accused was thought to have been under the influence. That's the charge. Can you imagine, on the eve of passing this legislation, that a wonderful young man in this province who surely must have been anticipating Bill 138 because he was at the Brockville Riverfest on Friday talking about the importance of cleaning up our act — stop drinking and driving. Having done that at work all day — and according to the Brockville police chief, he was an exemplary citizen and member of the Brockville police force, civilian side — to be killed Friday night by allegedly someone under the influence is just a tragic and painful reminder of what is still out there.

I'm not a psychiatrist, I'm not a psychologist, and I don't expect perfection. God forbid that I should expect perfection in humankind. That incident happened in our province just a few days ago. He was buried yesterday in Cornwall. And I'm sorry to say that friends, acquaintances, still through these mid and late years of this decade sometimes feel free to drink and drive.

I want to say to the minister, I know of his commitment and his dedication to this. But I'll tell you, when I look at the Loranger case in Ottawa, a police officer of, what, 18 months ago — I didn't bring the file with me, but in that case there was some concern. There was a fatality. So we've got a lot of work to do yet.

I want to say quickly I support the penalties, though I come from rural Ontario. There is no Mississauga Transit in rural Renfrew. There is no York regional transit, there is no TTC, there is no OC Transpo. Most of this province is today urban and suburban. There is some measure of public transit. If you live in La Passe or Westmeath or Palmer Rapids or Wilno or Bissett Creek in my county, there is no public transit. Your car and your half-ton truck, as the member for Huron would know as well as I, is absolutely essential to your economic livelihood.

I know members will say, "Let that be a good warning to people before they think about drinking and driving," and I agree with that sentiment. But there are hundreds of thousands of people in this province who live in purely rural environments. There is no TTC; there is no OC

Transpo. I hear from police officers and officers of the court that that rural reality sometimes causes some behaviour that nobody wants to support and quite frankly most of us don't even want to acknowledge exists.

I want to say something about highway maintenance, and I don't want to be too judgemental or censorious, I say to my friend the minister of highways, wearing a radioactive tie this afternoon. The tie is almost as radioactive as he was here last Wednesday when the government House leader told him that his beloved bill might take second fiddle to the House rules. I'm not here to talk about that today.

There is something going on on the highways. We are seeing altogether too many flying truck wheels. The incidence of this kind of flying truck wheel is obviously going up and going up sharply. I've got correspondence from constituents of mine. I'll just simply cite one. I received a letter this spring, in February, from a Mrs Patricia Brisson from RR 3, Cobden, and she talks at some length about her concerns —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Is that my cousin?

**Mr Conway:** It may be, I say to the member from Cochrane. Quoting her letter, "My husband has been a truck driver for over 30 years." She's been talking to him about his concerns and she says in her letter to me that there is something going on. Is it deregulation? Maybe. Is it just a lower standard of maintenance? Maybe. I don't know what the reasons are, but something is going on that is not in the public interest.

I'm selfish in this respect. I live on the highways of Ontario. I've said before, I drive something in the order of 90,000 kilometres a year and I've done that for 22 and a half years of my life. I get worried, and I have been more worried in recent months than I had been 10 or 15 years ago because you hear these stories — and it's happening in my own constituency. We've had a couple of incidents in the Ottawa Valley just this winter and spring with tires flying off. Fortunately no one was hurt. So it is a very real concern, not just here in the Golden Horseshoe but throughout the province.

I want to take my seat by making the point that I believe there are a number of factors. I do think maintenance is a problem and it has to be addressed. I observed that twice this winter, once with an OPP vehicle just a few weeks ago, and once with an MTO snowplow up in the Sault Ste Marie area in the winter, two government vehicles, or vehicles working in the employ of the Ontario government, lost their wheels.

So I say to the minister, we as government and as legislators must be concerned about that. If government of Ontario snowplows are losing their wheels up in the Sault Ste Marie area, we just better be a little careful about the moralizing that we offer to the private sector or to others. If the OPP vehicles start to lose their tires, it doesn't look very good on the enforcement side, does it? So I think there is a problem with maintenance. I think there is a growing problem with highway etiquette. I think there's a problem with training. As I think my friend from Walkerville pointed out, we don't really have the highest standards before we qualify people to ride the freeways with these huge rigs. I think that's something that's got to be looked at, and I know it was raised in the standing committee.

Let me say finally that highway maintenance in some parts of this province is clearly a part of the problem. I'll tell you, if over the last few winters you've been driving a truck through Algonquin Park, Highway 60 from Whitney to the west gate, and lots of my constituents earn their living by doing that, the road has been a mess. At 5 o'clock in the morning, some truck driver's trying to make his way from a sawmill in Madawaska to a processing plant up in Huntsville or Timiskaming or Quebec and you have to face that spectacle. It is not a pretty sight, and that's our responsibility. Highway 17, between Deep River and Mattawa, with those incredibly rugged hills up through Bissett Creek and Deux-Rivières, has been below standard. Privately, the MTO people who work on that and who are very hardworking people, have told me so.

**1600**

Our standards have been dropping and it's helping to create this problem. I won't quote, but the Eganville Leader of February 25, 1997, has an editorial under the title of "Horrendous." They talk about winter highway maintenance through some other parts of Renfrew county. That's our responsibility.

This is a big province in a big country. The tyranny of distance is always with us in a country where five or six months of the year is winter. I say to the minister and to the government that we have some responsibilities that we have not been discharging, I believe, to an adequate degree.

Yes, I support Bill 138. Yes, I have some reservations. And yes, I expect to see, if for no other reason than for the memory of David Primeau, that we are going to improve our performance to ensure that some of these issues get addressed, not just in a debate today when everybody's looking, but tomorrow, next winter and the next decade.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I want to take a very brief moment to simply indicate, along with my friend the member for Algoma, I'm sure, that this is how the Legislature can work when there's consensus on a piece of legislation.

Second reading was limited to, I think, one day at most. Third reading is being limited to less than a day. Committee hearings were expedited, although they were full enough that we had interesting debate there and amendments put forward by my colleague the member for Windsor-Walkerville and others.

I want to say that the cooperation has been there from the opposition throughout. I want to express sympathy with the Minister of Transportation, without trying to cause problems for him. His patience has been a virtue because, as my friend from Algoma and I have noted, this legislation could have been through much before this if the government was more interested in this legislation than in shoving its rule changes through.

I saw the other night genuine anger in the voice and the face of the Minister of Transportation, with justification. He is anxious, as we are, to get this bill through. The good news is that it is going to go through this afternoon and it has been a high priority for all of us. It

has many components that are going to be helpful, including some of the suggestions made by my friend Pat Hoy, the member for Essex-Kent, and the bill which was proposed by Dwight Duncan, the member for Windsor-Walkerville, which is now contained in certain parts in this legislation as well.

So this is a good afternoon for the Legislature in this regard. I look forward to my friend from Cochrane South adding his comments to this debate as well.

**Mr Bisson:** Since there is unanimous consent to get this bill passed, I am going to try not to take too much time. Unfortunately, far more time was taken earlier, cutting in on my time, so I will try to be as succinct as I can.

Let me start off this debate by saying what a difference a day makes. Last week we had the opportunity to bring what was a bill that had all-party support before this Legislature, a bill that members of this assembly from all parties had decided was a priority to be passed for the people of Ontario, a government with a majority on the other side of the House, and this government couldn't get a bill through the House to which there was unanimous consent and all-party support.

It makes you wonder where the government House leader is at and how capable the government House leader is of running this House. I have always understood, being in this Legislature for a while, that normally the way things work is that when you get to the end of a session, those bills that have that kind of support — private members' bills or even government bills, for that matter — are dealt with in a very quick manner on the last day of the session.

For whatever reason — I suspect partly because of the rule changes, but also I'm beginning to suspect because of a lack of understanding of how this House is supposed to run — this government House leader, Mr Johnson, in my view, was very inept in being able to deal with a bill that had support from all sides of the House. In fact, our NDP House leader, the member for Algoma, had to work with the Minister of Transportation to lobby the government House leader to find a way to get this bill passed. We from the New Democratic Party, as well as the Minister of Transportation, in fairness to him, along with the member for Mississauga South understood that this is a bill that is very important to the people of this province. We're talking about people's lives when it comes to drunk driving. We're talking about people's lives when it comes to truck safety. For whatever reason, the government House leader really had difficulty coming to terms with how to get a bill through the House that has all-party support. You've really got to give your head a shake and wonder where the House leader is when it comes to being able to pass legislation through this House.

The other thing I want to say very quickly, and I want to say this directly to the Minister of Transportation — it was touched on earlier by the member for St Catharines — is that this goes to show that when the government decides they want to do something positive, we, the members of the opposition, either in the New Democratic Party or in the Liberal Party, are prepared to work with this government to pass what we think is fair and just legislation. The Minister of Transportation in this particular case, maybe slowly, maybe ineptly, maybe a whole bunch of things, in the end brought forward a piece of legislation that doesn't go as far as I think all of us would like it to go but certainly takes a big step forward when it comes to drunk driving and takes a positive step forward when it comes to truck safety legislation.

The point I want to make here is that whenever the government of Ontario, led by Mike Harris, wants to come to this House and pass progressive legislation, you will be able to count on the members of the NDP — I can't speak for the Liberals, but I'm certain they're the same — to work with you to pass what is positive legislation.

Unfortunately this government, on balance, is passing legislation that I and other members of this assembly, and I would even say to a certain extent some members on the government side, have difficulty supporting: rule changes; the megacity bill, Bill 103; the merger of the school boards, Bill 104; the WCB bill; the dismantling of rent control. The litany of bad legislation goes on, and on those we will fight you head to head. We will do what we have to do within the NDP caucus to make sure that the people of Ontario are heard and that we try to find a way to amend what this government is doing so that at least it is somewhat palatable and livable for the people of this province.

But when you're ready to come forward with what we consider to be positive legislation, we will be there and we will not play politics with that issue.

I want to say to the minister again — I've said this at committee and I'll say it here again — we know that the government took some positive steps last year to work with the industry to formulate a number of recommendations that are called Target '97. Within Target '97, an industry-ministry task force that was brought together, they looked at the issues of truck safety. They have identified a number of initiatives that can be moved on by this government both by way of legislation and by way of regulation to deal with truck safety in a comprehensive way. This bill doesn't do this. However, it does have two initiatives within it that are positive. It deals with at least one of the issues contained in the recommendations of Target '97. With regard to the flying truck wheel legislation, I think the government may be trying to deal with that issue in a little bit of a political way, but none the less they're trying to deal with it.

The point I make is this: Don't think for one second, Minister of Transportation, that you can now go away and not worry about truck safety legislation. You know and I know that we have a problem on our roads because of what's happened in the industry. We have an industry that has been deregulated, an industry in which there is severe competition. In order to find a way to compete with each other, they're cutting in some cases on safety and that's affecting the conditions of our highways and affecting the safety of the motorists of this province. You, as the Minister of Transportation, have a responsibility, as I do, as NDP critic for transportation, to make sure that we try to deal with how to fix the mess that deregulation has brought in. There have been some positive

sides to deregulation. No question when it comes to the shippers, the customers of the trucking industry, they have saved money as far as costs are concerned, but when it comes to safety, there has been a real problem as far as the deteriorating level of safety in the industry is concerned.

There are a number of recommendations within Target '97 that you can move on by way of regulation, about another 30% to 40% that you need to deal with by way of legislation, and I expect you, as Minister of Transportation, to come back this fall with comprehensive truck safety legislation, something you promised us you were going to do all the way back to about two months ago. I'm not going to go through the history of Bill 125 and the history of how the Premier had promised, along with the Minister of Transportation, that we were going to have comprehensive truck safety legislation, but I will just say this: You know, Minister, and I know this ain't it. This is not comprehensive truck safety legislation. There are still 78 recommendations within Target '97 that need to be dealt with.

**1610**

The other point I want to make is, as you move forward, if you do — because my suspicion is your government House leader is not going to give you the time in this assembly to deal with yet more truck safety legislation. I hope I'm wrong, but I believe the government House leader has basically given you your day in the House and it'll be a pretty difficult task for the Minister of Transportation to come back to this House yet again with more legislation.

But if you do, make sure the public is involved. One of the problems we had under Target '97, the scope of the people who participated in Target '97 did not include some of the public stakeholders and other stakeholders who could have been at the table in order to strengthen the process. We say to the Minister of Transportation, look at the recommendations of Target '97 closely. You know what they are. Work with industry, the public, ourselves and others in order to figure out what are the best ways to bring forward legislation, which are the best ways to deal with regulation, and let's move forward in order to make our highways safer for the people of this province.

I say what we need to do is basically two things: We need to make sure that we change, yes, the culture of the industry so that safety is paramount. Although there are some trucking companies out there that are trying to do a really good job of truck safety, there are some bad apples in the bunch and we need to get at those. Work with us and others within the transportation industry in order to make that happen.

The other thing that we need to recognize is that trucks are not big cars. We have to come to terms with the fact that we have vehicles on our roads that are weighing as much as 120,000 pounds and we need to treat those vehicles much differently than we treat a car, and we need to have legislation and regulations that realize all of that.

In the last minute that I have, I will just say —

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Why didn't they bring this one last week?

**Mr Bisson:** That was going to be my closing comment. The last comment I make, and I want the minister to remember, is that all parties at the committee level have passed a motion that basically says we have the right to call the minister or his appointee back to a committee within 12 months in order to look at progress made on the issue of truck safety.

I hold you to your word. I hold you to the word of the parliamentary assistant and others who have promised that you're going to come back with both legislation and regulations within a short period of time. We were told six months in the committee. I doubt you're going to be able to hold to that, but if there's anything we can do or that I can do as critic to help you once again to try to convince your House leader to take this issue seriously, I will be there to assist you because I believe in the end what's important is the whole issue of making sure that the public is safe.

I will close by saying what a difference 24 hours make. Last week, the government didn't see its way fit to passing what was a bill that had all-party support and it took, unfortunately, a lot of convincing on the part of my House leader and the Minister of Transportation to the government House leader to get him to understand how important this issue is to the motoring public.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Just very briefly. I want to say, as someone who is very concerned about automobile safety on the highways, I think it's unfortunate that this government has turned what could have been an all-party effort to move forward in a concerted manner into a bit of a farce.

The fact is that last Thursday this bill was not a government priority. Changing the rules of the House was the government priority. Then on Friday suddenly it was an emergency and we had to come back here this week to do it when in fact we spent a whole lot of time on Thursday evening arguing with the government House leader to try and persuade him to bring this bill in for debate.

The government has demonstrated, I guess beyond any shadow of a doubt, that for everyone except the Minister of Transportation on that side, or almost everyone, road safety isn't a priority. Changing the rules of the House is far more important.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate? Seeing none, would the minister like to wrap up?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please, member for Algoma.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I certainly would like to once again express my gratitude to all the members of this House for their support on this bill. I think we've gone through a learning experience and we're going to continue to learn. I have listened very carefully to what the members have said in this House today about some of the things that maybe we should consider doing and some of the things we haven't considered doing. Certainly, you have my commitment to make safety very much a priority in Ontario. I look for your help and support and suggestions on how we can work together and realize the safest roads in North America. Thank you all again for your support.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Palladini has moved third reading of Bill 138. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, Her Honour awaits.

*Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.*

## ROYAL ASSENT
## SANCTION ROYALE

**Hon Hilary Weston (Lieutenant Governor):** Pray be seated.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meeting thereof, passed a certain bill to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** The following is the title of the bill to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 138, An Act to promote road safety by increasing periods of suspension for Criminal Code convictions, impounding vehicles of suspended drivers, requiring treatment for impaired drivers, raising fines for driving while suspended, impounding critically defective commercial vehicles, creating an absolute liability offence for wheel separations, raising fines for passing stopped school buses, streamlining accident reporting requirements and amending other road safety programs / Projet de loi 138, Loi visant à favoriser la sécurité routière en augmentant les périodes de suspension pour les déclarations de culpabilité découlant du Code criminel, en mettant en fourrière les véhicules de conducteurs faisant l'objet d'une suspension, en exigeant le traitement des conducteurs en état d'ébriété, en augmentant les amendes pour conduite pendant que son permis est suspendu, en mettant en fourrière les véhicules utilitaires comportant des défauts critiques, en créant une infraction entraînant la responsabilité absolue en cas de détachement des roues, en augmentant les amendes pour dépassement d'un autobus scolaire arrêté, en simplifiant les exigences relatives à la déclaration des accidents et en modifiant d'autres programmes de sécurité routière.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** In Her Majesty's name, the Honourable Lieutenant Governor doth assent to this bill.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, l'honorable lieutenante-gouverneure sanctionne ce projet de loi.

*Her Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**1620**

## REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move government notice of motion number 29:

That the June 25, 1997, report of the Integrity Commissioner be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, that the committee consider the report and respond directly to the Integrity Commissioner and that the committee be authorized to meet for two days before July 25, 1997, and that the committee present its report to the assembly on the first available day that reports by committees may be received.

I'm moving this motion in response to the June 25, 1997, report of the Integrity Commissioner and the ruling of the Speaker of that same day. I might also say that the Premier, in a statement to the House on June 25, also responded to the Integrity Commissioner's report, and on that same day a number of members of this House posed questions on the Integrity Commissioner's report which were responded to by the government.

The Premier explained that the Health Services Restructuring Commission was established in the first instance in an effort to remove partisan politics from the necessary and difficult process of health care restructuring. I suppose those who have been in the House for some period of time will know that there has been a concern with regard to elected representatives meddling or playing a high profile in terms of very sensitive health care issues, issues that require a great deal of expertise. The Health Services Restructuring Commission is composed of people with decades and decades of expertise in the health care field, more so, I suspect, than all the members of this House from all parties put together, and certainly are greatly respected for that expertise and their ability.

In response to the Integrity Commissioner's finding that the Health Services Restructuring Commission was a quasi-judicial body, the Premier has asked the Attorney General to meet with the Office of the Integrity Commissioner to clarify issues raised for the benefit of the ministers and the members of this Legislature. This clarification is required to ensure that we as ministers, and all members of this House, appropriately represent the interests of those who elected us.

Certainly this issue has raised the prospect that some members in the hospital community in the riding in question have applauded that certain initiatives were taken on their behalf. Many people do expect to be represented and to be spoken for as constituents, even though, as ministers and perhaps as members, there are restrictions on what we as members of this Legislature can do. This is a question that needs some clarification.

In an effort to support the ruling of the Integrity Commissioner and to obtain clarification on the ruling, the Attorney General has had some preliminary discussion with the commissioner. There may be some confusion over what constitutes "quasi-judicial" and how it applies to various boards and commissions. The commissioner at this point in time I believe is on vacation, but the work will continue with the Attorney General upon the return of the commissioner in July.

In the meantime, the motion I've tabled this afternoon for debate is an attempt to live up to the requirement of the Members' Integrity Act, which was introduced in 1994 — I think that was when it was introduced — specifically subsection 34(2). That states, "The assembly

shall consider and respond to the report within 30 days after the day the report is laid before it." The motion under discussion would allow for two days of consideration by the standing committee of the Legislative Assembly before July 25, 1997, which is 30 days after the report has been laid before the Legislature.

It's also important to note that in his report of June 25 the Integrity Commissioner recommended that no penalty be imposed. Under the Members' Integrity Act, the Integrity Commissioner, upon finding a contravention of the legislation, can make one of four different recommendations: (1) that no penalty be imposed, (2) that the member be reprimanded, (3) that the member be suspended, and (4) the most serious one is that the member's seat would be declared vacant. Those are the four possible actions that could be recommended. In this case the commissioner recommended that no penalty be imposed. This is because the commissioner did find that the minister communicated with the chair of the Health Services Restructuring Commission "in good faith in the mistaken belief that he was entitled to do so."

Those are really all the comments I wanted to make about this particular matter. It is one the government takes seriously and I am very hopeful that allowing this motion for debate this afternoon and directing the matter to the Legislative Assembly committee will meet the test of the Members' Integrity Act. It shows commitment under the act, that the government takes the matter seriously.

I might add that the minister this afternoon has indicated his willingness to attend that particular committee and speak with the members of that particular committee. In that vein, I hope all the members of this House will be able to support the process we've put before the House, all three parties will be able to participate in that committee process and the members from all three parties will be able to support the motion I've laid before the House this afternoon.

**1630**

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** This is not a happy occasion in this Legislature. It's the kind of occasion that legislators regret, and I among them. We're brought here together today because of the report of the Integrity Commissioner with respect to the member for St George-St David, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. But we're all reminded of the fact that this is not the first time, not the second time, but indeed the third time this minister, this member, has been found wanting.

It behooves us all to remember what the integrity act is all about. In particular I want to read paragraph 4 of the preamble of the Members' Integrity Act: "Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest scrutiny." It is a very heavy burden on all of us. It is even more of a burden on ministers of the crown.

The particular instance we're considering today has to do with an action on the part of the minister with regard to the hospital restructuring commission and two hospitals which wanted additional time to present their case to the commission.

The response of the Integrity Commissioner to the request by the member for York South could not be more unequivocal if it tried. In fact, the minister was found in breach of the Members' Integrity Act. He was found to have violated section 4 of the act.

The government tried to bury this issue. The government tried to tie us up with debates on procedures and on rules. We are here today at great taxpayers' expense to consider an issue which we are bound to consider under the Members' Integrity Act. We have no choice but to review the report, to consider it and to respond to it, as required under the legislation.

This all really begins with a system created by this government which, at the very least, is unfair. It all begins with the infamous Bill 26, the bully bill, which sets up the hospital restructuring commission. Without understanding that context, you really cannot understand the point at which we got here.

If I may, Speaker, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to split my time with the member for St Catharines and the member for York South.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Downsview requests unanimous consent to split her time. Is it agreed? It is agreed.

**Ms Castrilli:** We all remember Bill 26. It's that piece of legislation that took away a great number of powers and concentrated them in the executive branch of this government. In particular, schedule F of that legislation, which deals with the functions of the hospital restructuring commission, sets up a commission which has wide powers to develop, establish and maintain an effective and adequate health care system and the restructuring of health care services provided in Ontario communities.

Furthermore, that particular commission is immune from any liability. It is largely unaccountable. There are no proceedings that can be brought against it as long as they act in good faith. Nevertheless, they can proceed with absolute immunity.

It has been argued by the House leader that there is some dispute as to whether the health restructuring committee is quasi-judicial or not. I think the response of the commissioner is very clear on that point. "Quasi-judicial" is not an equivocal term — it is in fact a defined term in law — and there is no dispute as to whether it is quasi-judicial or not.

The question then becomes, what should the minister have known? The minister made an error in good faith, but ignorance of the law is absolutely no excuse. It's even less of an excuse for a minister of the crown. For the minister or indeed the Premier or the House leader to plead that this was not a quasi-judicial body and that the error was committed in good faith is absolutely groundless. Even if there were grounds for supporting that proposition, I'm sure the Attorney General could counsel the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing and could instruct him on the fact that ignorance of the law is no excuse. You indeed should know that dictum.

What has the commission done so far? It has set about across the province indicating that it plans to restructure the way health services are governed. It's interesting, when you bring it down to Metro Toronto, the kinds of hospitals that are being slated for closure. They're not the

big, mega-hospitals, not the hospitals that have wide, diversified systems. They are the community hospitals: Women's College Hospital, Doctors Hospital, Northwestern hospital, North York Branson. It's the smaller hospitals, largely very efficient hospitals.

In my own community of North York, North York Branson is one of those hospitals that has always managed its books very effectively. It provides high quality of service to its residents. It has a very large senior population, which could with great difficulty move out of the area. There are no hospitals in close proximity for that particular group. Therefore, there are decisions that have to be questioned, and citizens are rightly questioning those decisions.

That's not to mention going outside Metro to hospitals like Montfort, which is a ticking constitutional time bomb for this government if that decision should go ahead to close Montfort.

What it means for ordinary people is that the services they are accustomed to in their communities will no longer be there for basic health service for those who need it the most. That's basically what it means. It's no wonder that people are concerned and it is no wonder that people are trying to make some sense of this health restructuring commission and it's no wonder that the member for York South, seeing the kind of interference that was potentially taking place, asked for guidance as to whether this was acceptable behaviour.

It's also clear that other ministers of this government felt there was a difficulty in dealing with the commission directly. The Minister of Agriculture and Food in fact declined to interfere directly with the commission, saying he could not do that, he was not mandated to do that. The Integrity Commissioner himself has said that the appropriate mechanism would be to deal with the minister responsible, not to go beyond the minister to try to use one's position to influence the outcome of the commission's findings.

There is an arrogance to this government that we have seen throughout its mandate. It certainly began with Bill 26 and the sweeping away of some basic democratic rights, the concentration of important decisions with an executive branch which is not open for view, with no input from communities on very important subjects such as health care, which is what we're discussing here today. But there are others that are equally important: the megacity legislation, and here this minister as well has been involved; the megacity legislation in which 76% of the people who voted said they didn't want it — absolutely ignored by this government, which decided to barrel it through despite the constant objections which still exist from the citizenry of the greater Metropolitan Toronto area.

There is hardly a group that hasn't been touched by the sweeping measures that this government has brought forth with very little consultation and with very little time to adjust to the kinds of changes being envisioned.

**1640**

I need only cite some very prominent ones in the labour field: Employment equity is a thing of the past, and women in particular in this province have struggled to earn the same wages as men and to be given the same opportunities, only to find that that particular law is out the window; labour rights; successor rights; the right to a decent compensation if you're injured at work.

It's been nurses and teachers and children and women. There isn't a group that hasn't been touched. For heaven's sake, you've changed the definition of "disabled" to ensure that fewer people could qualify for assistance even though they are in desperate need of assistance in this province.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** To ensure the right people get the funds.

**Ms Castrilli:** A member says you ensure the right people get the funds. I think it's how the government defines "right people" that's exactly the issue. Not just your friends are the right people; all kinds of people require help and assistance.

It's rather instructive to read the report of the commissioner with respect to the minister in question. He refers first of all to the fact that this isn't the first time the minister has been found wanting. He refers to an incident where he was also asked for his opinion and found that the minister's behaviour was inappropriate; where the minister's executive assistant dealt with a senior partner in a major law firm that was thinking of bringing litigation against the ministry, and lo and behold, the litigation did not go forward. The commissioner was sufficiently concerned about that to mention it in this particular report.

Then there was the case of the contempt motion on which the Speaker of this House had to rule. There again the minister was found to have exceeded his capacity.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Want to read the decision of the House?

**Ms Castrilli:** I'd be happy to read you the decision of the Speaker of the House, which says quite clearly that the minister exceeded his authority by sending out information before the legislation had actually passed.

But the ultimate arrogance of this government was that when they finally were taken to court on the issue of trustees, what did this government have the nerve to argue in court? That they could implement legislation even before it was passed by this House. And why? Because they had the royal prerogative to do so. It's evident in the court cases that that's precisely what the Attorney General argued through his lawyers.

Can you imagine embarking into the 21st century in a democratic society, which we pride ourselves in having here in Ontario, with a government that has the gall to go into court and claim a right which has not been claimed since Charles I of England? By the way, I remind you that Charles I lost his head over it, as well as his throne. That is the kind of arrogance we see in this government and that is the kind of arrogance we see in this minister.

The Integrity Commissioner is quite right to come down very hard on this issue. He goes to great lengths to talk about the importance of ministerial responsibility. I'll quote some of the commissioner's response with respect to that, because he is very concerned about what it means to be a minister and the kind of onus it puts on a minister of the crown.

It is of no use for the House leader to say this was done in good faith and there was no penalty given. It's

interesting that what the House leader did not mention in his speech to the House was the correspondence that took place subsequent to that, where my leader asked for clarification of what Judge Evans meant by "no penalty." Judge Evans said that in his opinion the recommendation that no penalty be imposed refers to the member's status as a member of the Legislative Assembly. He goes on: "Whether a member of the executive council remains in cabinet is not a matter for my office. It would not be correct to draw any inference that my recommendation that no penalty be imposed has any relationship to a member's status as a member of the executive council."

He therefore puts it right smack back into the Premier's court, and in some sense in the court of this assembly, to decide what penalty, if any, should be imposed. It does not mean that the minister is absolved of all liability. In fact, Mr Justice Evans goes to great lengths to say that Mr Leach has significant problems in dealing with his responsibilities as minister. If I might just quote that for you, Speaker, it says, "In my opinion, Mr Leach is having difficulty in adopting an attitude which is less confrontational, more consistent with his present office as a member of the executive council and more appreciative of the parliamentary conventions associated therewith."

I think that's pretty clear, that the minister has had considerable difficulty and that he does not take the responsibilities of his ministry seriously. In fact, it's consistent with the kind of top-down approach this government has had. They feel they can impose anything on anyone. This particular instance shows it very clearly once again.

There is the issue of whether acting in good will is a sufficient reason for excusing the minister. Once again the commissioner is very clear on that. He does not feel that this is any less reason for saying there is a breach. There's nothing in the act that says, "If it's an error in judgement, you are excused from complying with the act." Quite to the contrary. If you are found wanting, you are in breach, and that's precisely what the commissioner has found in this particular case.

It's kind of interesting that the judge in this case said the error in judgement is based on his limited experience in government. I'd like to comment by way of introducing a very interesting letter which was sent to the Globe and Mail on July 2, 1997. I just want you to hear what ordinary citizens think of this error in judgement, this lack of experience. It's a letter that comes from Norman Rosencwaig from Toronto. It's worthy of note:

"Referring to Mr Leach's breach of cabinet rules, Ontario's Integrity Commissioner stated that it 'was an error in judgement, based on (Mr Leach's) limited experience in government.' Premier Mike Harris agrees. The Premier said, 'In my opinion, we should accept the advice given from the Integrity Commissioner.' The 'advice' the Premier accepts is based on the fact that Mr Leach has 'limited experience.'

"How can Mr Leach have limited experience and be sufficiently competent to oversee some of the most dramatic and potentially devastating changes in Ontario history? I don't mind Mr Leach gaining experience in government. But couldn't he start with something small and work his way up? And can't Premier Harris find some competent person to fill an important cabinet position until Mr Leach has more experience?"

I think that's the voice of the people and nothing more needs to be added. The notion that the member has no experience is simply not to be believed.

Where do we go from here? The matter will be referred to a legislative committee, but let me say that there is a very strong convention in our parliamentary system that where a minister has been found wanting, the honourable thing is in fact to resign.

**1650**

If I may, I will quote one of the strongest authorities on parliamentary procedures and convention that we have in Canada, Senator Eugene Forsey. In his book The Question of Confidence in Responsible Government — and that's really what we're talking about here, confidence and responsible government — he states very clearly:

"Notwithstanding the pre-eminent place of the Prime Minister" — in this case the Premier — "in sustaining or sacrificing ministers under attack, there does seem to be a universal acceptance of the proposition that where personal culpability on the part of a minister is shown in the form of private or public conduct that is generally regarded as unbecoming and unworthy of a minister of the crown, the expectation is that the minister should tender his resignation." The book cites lots of examples of that.

This of course will be a matter that will be referred to the Legislative Assembly committee, and I endorse that. But there is one thing I would like to suggest at this point, that we have an obligation under the legislation, under the Members' Integrity Act, not only to consider but to respond to the report. The Legislative Assembly committee will consider the report and will hold the requisite hearings and will prepare a report which will come back to this House. But for us to fulfil our obligation under the Members' Integrity Act we are required to respond to it. Simply tabling that report in the House will not absolve us of our obligation under the legislation.

I would like to move an amendment to the motion which would add the following:

"And further, in the opinion of this assembly, that the report from the committee be debated in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for one sessional day."

That would allow us to fulfil our obligation under the act, that we could in fact —

*Interjection.*

**Ms Castrilli:** I submit the amendment to you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Ms Castrilli has moved that the motion be amended by adding the following:

"And further, in the opinion of this assembly, that the report from the committee be debated in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for one sessional day."

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Agreed.

**Interjections:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Downsview.

**Ms Castrilli:** I think it's self-evident on its face. Section 34 of the act is very clear. If I could cite you subsection 34(2), it says, "The assembly shall consider and respond to the report within 30 days after the day the

report is laid before it." There is no way that we can respond to the report by simply having it tabled in the House. It would require reading the report and debating the findings of the report in order to have full consideration of the report to be able to respond to it.

It seems fairly evident on the surface. I would have thought it was in keeping with the government's amendment. I did not see it at all as a controversial amendment. I saw it as a friendly amendment, a way to put closure on this issue, to deal with it firmly and finally, and I would hope that all members of the House would support it.

I would also say to you that the language of this act is very clear. We cannot simply have a report that's tabled here. We have to fulfil our ultimate obligation to bring this thing to a conclusion, and that requires a debate. Only through a debate in the House can we deal with all of the issues which we can only touch upon here but which will be dealt with in committee, and indeed there may be others that will come forward. There may be recommendations from the committee which come forward. You cannot have a document which will simply lie dormant, reported to the House and nothing more is done with it.

I would urge all of you to support this amendment and view it as in keeping with not only your amendment but the very clear intent of the act.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It is with some trouble in terms of the requirement we have here today that I address the motion we have before us. It is on the surface a rather simple issue. It is about a minister who put forward his own views surrounding a matter affecting hospitals or organizations in his constituency, and that is how the government would have us see it. Unfortunately, it is about much more than that. It is about a government rudderless: a government rudderless about health policy, a government rudderless about conflict-of-interest guidelines for its ministers and a government rudderless about how to deal with the basic fundamental integrity required of it.

We have from the Integrity Commissioner a ruling that helps us to understand that the hospital restructuring commission set up in December 1995, originally in Bill 26, by this government has in effect been compromised by actions on the part of this minister who is the subject of the report of the Integrity Commissioner, who acted in a fashion that was contrary to the requirements of a cabinet minister and has been cited for such in the report. But we learn as a consequence of the revelation of that finding that the Premier tells us about two other ministers who acted in a similar fashion.

We find it very disturbing that we are unable to have actions on the part of anyone in the government who would try and bring confidence back to this particular commission. People need to realize that this is a commission appointed by the very cabinet ministers who are seeking to influence it and who are telling us in their different ways that they didn't recognize the problems they were creating with that conflict. The very people who are making the decisions about the closings and openings of hospitals are being communicated with by the same government members, those who have the special responsibility of sitting on the executive council or the cabinet and deciding what the powers are of this committee in the sense of the regulations that are passed, the identity of who sits there and under what conditions, and that power on their part has to be taken with a due degree of responsibility.

We need to say, because it bespeaks the rudderlessness of this government when it comes to matters of this nature, which are about elemental fairness, that some members of this government, a small number, did recognize that. We have, for example, the minister for francophone affairs who told his constituents clearly he could not touch the commission because he understood it was independent. We have also heard about another member, the Attorney General, who made that comment to his constituents when asked weeks and months ago.

In fact this very matter was raised in this House, and rather than any proactive action on the part of this government, rather than an effort on the part of this government to be scrupulous in its dealings with this commission, we had a perpetuation of a defence by no less than the Minister of Health that it was somehow proper for them to put forward the argument that a commission of this nature, owing its life to the Premier, to the cabinet ministers, could then at the same time have an identity as being independent and yet be approached by those same cabinet ministers. It is disturbing that this cloud has settled on the commission and that there is absolutely no action, no voluntary action on the part of this government that would contend with that.

We have some sympathy with the minister affected in this particular case. We recognize that he was cited earlier by the Integrity Commissioner, not for a finding of fault but for going against the preamble in a previous case, of not showing due diligence, in a way, for the integrity standard that's required. Here again is an instance where his capacity as a minister is what has been contravened, that it is his special role as someone who is able to influence, by virtue of that office, the outcome of various things, to make sure that he doesn't abuse or misuse that power. Even when on the surface of it that power is being put to the benefit of some organizations, that power has the effect of changing the outcome.

**1700**

The letter which was directed to the Integrity Commissioner makes very, very clear that the minister used this in a way to tell his constituents that not only would he act on their behalf with the commission but that he was successful. He said, "I asked them to change a date and they have done so." In a way, it was public relations on the part of the minister to show that he had some degree of influence with the commission.

We understand, although we haven't been provided with a copy, that there was a published letter, affecting one of the other ministers of this government, also directed to the commission. What we have here is a government that's trying to have it more than both ways, that is wanting to influence the outcome of the commission, wanting to be seen to be doing so when it's advantageous to it.

Yet at the same time, when the really tough business comes down, when the hospitals in the minister's riding, for example, the Wellesley Hospital and Women's

College Hospital, unique and extremely valuable institutions in this community, when they appeal to the cabinet in which this minister sits, and they say to him, "You need to be fighting for these institutions by giving us a policy for women's health, a policy for urban health, the kinds of things that would make our hospitals more viable in the eyes of the commission," we don't hear anything about the minister's efforts in that regard.

We learn from the Integrity Commissioner that is a route that's been open to him, that is the proper route for the members of the executive council to take when it comes to this particular commission. There is a route there they can have. We've seen it exercised now on behalf of small and rural ridings. We know the Minister of Finance has been able to influence the opening of a hospital in his riding. We understand that political dimension has now opened the floodgates, if you will, to at least some of the small and rural communities that exist around the province. There has been a policy established there.

Yet we're supposed to bear from this government the idea that all they can do is shrug, that they can't act for Women's College Hospital, they can't do anything except somehow behind the table, with letters that aren't disclosed, with other kinds of avenues. That's not even the fact of the matter. The Integrity Commissioner and the commission itself make very clear that they're governed by the Minister of Health. Every single decision made by this so-called arm's-length commission is a decision that is validated by the Minister of Health. He doesn't need to lift a pen to do it because he can change and bury what they do any time he likes.

That's extremely clear if you look at, for example, the conference proceedings from March of this year. The executive director of the commission says that the commission can make decisions about hospital restructuring; however, if the minister believes that processes or decisions are seriously flawed, the cabinet can change the commission's mandate or dissolve it altogether.

If you look at the legislation and the regulation, the minister can change any little part he wants of what this commission does to any hospital in Sarnia, in Lambton, anywhere in the province — they've been hiding behind a fiction — and so too can they do in part of Women's College. Again, to bring back the point, it's the cabinet in which the Minister of Municipal Affairs sits that holds that power to bury what the commission does. The commission itself, back in March of last year, more than a year ago, identified that, told us that the cabinet was effectively in charge of the affairs of the commission.

That's why it's wrong. That's why the commissioner told us, without any reservation whatsoever, "It's wrong for cabinet ministers to directly approach this commission." When we asked in this House, more than two months ago, for clarification, when we asked the Premier, when we asked the Minister of Health, when we asked for knowledge even of the fact that there were cabinet ministers going to the commission, there were no answers. There was no disclosure. There was no openness of process. There was a hidden process taking place. We were forced to take this matter to the Integrity Commissioner, because unfortunately there is a flaw, there is a fault on the part of this government, where it cannot bring itself to the table on matters of integrity on its own.

We hate to be acting in that process when what we're looking for here is the recognition by this government of what it has created in terms of the commission. It has created problems in virtually every part of this province. It has created problems by virtue of the way the commission is constituted. Until very recently, no members on it were from small rural or northern areas. They were making decisions based on formulas, formulas that were imported from the United States, tools that were just slide rules applied to all manner of communities in Ontario.

Each of those communities was made to suffer from the threat of closing, the loss of doctors, the loss of privileges and the battling between different health organizations, all put upon by this commission. We look at the plight of the average members, perhaps even the constituents of the honourable members' ridings of St George-St David or St Andrew-St Patrick, where Doctors Hospital is located. They would like to influence the commission in a fair and open manner, but when we look at how this commission is set up, it is answerable only to itself, in the sense that the only appeal the government has afforded is heard by the commission. So for the commission to change its decision, it has to admit it's wrong.

Yet, well hidden in all the public relations done by the commission and all the public relations done by this government is the fact that it is the cabinet of this government which controls that commission. People are starting to understand that, just as those have been Harris hospital cuts, the 12% cuts that have been marching their way across the province, taking nurses and care out of every emergency room, every ICU, every basic care unit in every hospital across the province. Those are decisions made by this government. They've decided to deliver a tax cut instead of provide basic hospital care. That's a decision they made. But for some reason, for political reasons, we feel, this government has tried to dress up the ordering of closing of hospitals as something arm's length and independent.

You can't have it both ways is what the Integrity Commissioner has told this government. You simply cannot pretend that this is arm's length and independent and then, as the Minister of Health has done — he has stood in his place time after time after time and invited anyone in the province, including his cabinet colleagues, to influence that commission.

We hear from the commission that they want to be independent, want to be free of influence, and if they aren't they'll resign and so on. But we've just learned that there are ways and means of influencing even a commission that has that aspiration. Those ways and means are expressed right there in the small and rural policy, the policy this government put together three days before they were putting out a decision in Lambton county. Three days before this commission was going to order the closing of Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital, this government intervened in a very political fashion and in a fashion which is not accountable or available to the rest of us.

Why did cabinet decide there would be a small and rural policy? Why has cabinet decided that there won't be a francophone health policy that will at least consider the Montfort Hospital in Ottawa on its merits, that won't just apply some kind of slide-rule to it? Why isn't there going to be a policy that also considers women's health, so that the very unique role of the hospital the minister professes to be in favour of when it comes to the grandstanding letter he wrote his constituent — that we don't have his cabinet move in any such direction?

Nor do we have a policy for some of the middle-sized urban areas, for the members from Kitchener. We have nothing that will ensure the continued existence of St Mary's hospital, for example, because there simply is not, on the part of this government, the fundamental taking of responsibility in an open and accountable fashion. That is what the government has tried to avoid in the Niagara region, in virtually all parts of this province. They have tried to avoid taking responsibility for their own actions. Yet we found that one of the consequences of that has been, to put not too fine a point on it, to elicit action on the part of some of their own ministers because they can't work with the contorted rules the government has created to be able to reshape hospitals in this province.

We know when we look at the fallout from the Integrity Commissioner that perhaps the most significant result is going to be on the commission itself. Even if it believes it is scrupulous on its end, how can the commission pretend to be free from influence when we don't have tabled the documents that have been sent to it, used to influence it, by the other two ministers of the crown who have written to that commission? Why don't we have those documents tabled? Will we have those put forward in the committee hearings to which this is to be sent? Will that happen? Will the government show that now that it has been directed by the Integrity Commissioner, who is specifically in place with no axe to grind, who specifically even gives to the Minister of Municipal Affairs his seat — he says, "I won't affect your seat, I won't take away your seat in this House. This isn't that kind of offence."

**1710**

However, he has sent us a letter that makes very, very clear none of that, none of his comments of what he said was no punishment, had anything to do with Minister Leach's standing in cabinet. Rather, that is a decision specifically outside his purview.

I think what the people out there — and almost every part of the province will be among them — who worry about their hospital, wonder: "If they come and they take my hospital, the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart in Petrolia, if they're going to go and close one in Pembroke, is it going to be done fairly? Has this government set itself up to do right by me and my family? When we're sick, are we going to be subject to some political influence?"

That is where we stand today: A commission that granted an extension which on the surface seems like a procedural matter, but which is substantive; a government, quite conceivably a whole cabinet, with only a few exceptions that we know of, under the impression that, unlike the Ontario Securities Commission, they can walk in and talk to the hospital any time they would like.

How many individual presentations have there been? We don't know. Is there openness and accountability? Should we put that onus on the commission? We talked to the commission two weeks ago, before the Integrity Commissioner told us there was a serious problem, and they said they had no contact from cabinet ministers whatsoever. That was our knowledge until the day the Premier stood up in this House and said not one but three cabinet ministers have tried to influence the commission in a way that's contrary to what the Integrity Commissioner says.

We sit here today not knowing whether or not hospitals and sick people in the future in this province will be treated fairly by this government. What will it take by this government to demonstrate to the people of Sarnia, the people of Kitchener, the people of Niagara region and the people of Brampton that there will actually be some fairness when they come to town? How will they know that somebody else, with a cabinet minister of more standing, didn't have the influence that took away their hospital because of the scarce resources this government is only prepared to put into hospitals in this province? How will they know that?

It will take some conspicuous actions on the part of this government, actions which have been sadly lacking from its repertoire up to now. There has been no forthcomingness on the part of this government. The Minister of Health has not stood up and said, "I have made a fundamental mistake here; I have been directing cabinet ministers to talk to the commission when it's really my responsibility," even though, more than a year ago, the commission he appointed, that the Minister of Municipal Affairs helped to appoint, that the Premier helped to appoint, that the Attorney General helped to appoint, the Solicitor General, that they all were involved in appointing, knew that they were answerable to cabinet. Every few weeks, we get a submission that tells us an order in council has been passed putting members on this commission. Who are they appointed by? The self-same members of cabinet who have tried to influence them.

It's a fundamental issue of fairness, a test for this government on how they deal with this issue. Will they indeed let the minister who is the subject of this report appear before the committee? Will they indeed table the documents from the other ministers who they have volunteered have contacted the commission? Will they table a list of all the cabinet ministers who have contacted verbally, in person or over the telephone, this commission, so we can know the degree to which this commission and the adjustments, the changes, the closing, the shutting down of hospitals, have been politically influenced by this government in a way that's contrary to the legislation which not another government — this is not a case of ignorance from a previous government, from an unfamiliar situation. This government designed the hospital destruction commission. This is a creation of the Harris government, yet when it's contravened, when its integrity is impugned, the government has no problem raising its hands and saying, "Not us; we don't take any responsibility here." It's extremely unfortunate for the people of this province.

This is not a happy issue for the opposition. This is not something we wish to see brought down upon the Minister of Municipal Affairs. But it certainly is something the Minister of Municipal Affairs and this cabinet and this government have brought down upon themselves. People have been shaking their heads out there and saying: "How can you have a commission that's supposedly independent, when political policies are being made, when cabinet ministers have access to it? How can I believe they're going to do the job for me and my community?"

It's not a laughing matter. It's not the kind of thing that anybody in this province can dare ignore, because people are upset out there. They're upset because their hospital emergency waiting lines are getting longer. They're upset because they don't believe that anyone is looking out for them.

We have, with this motion here today and some of the amendments to it, a chance to prove to the public that this government has at least that much integrity, to say it's been wrong. Either the commission has to be withdrawn or somebody needs to resign in order to show us that.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a brief intervention to make in this regard. I want to take the approach of the silliness of having a commission. That's why we have a problem here today. The minister has made representations, and apparently two other ministers, according to the Premier, have made representations to the commission, despite the fact that the opposition has tried, through questioning of the Minister of Health, to determine just what the rules and regulations are. We get different answers at different times from that minister and from somebody else you might talk to.

Essentially, the flaw is setting up the commission and the flaw is Bill 26. If you wondered why the opposition took such extraordinary legislative action in terms of invoking a particular procedure to bring the government briefly to a halt, and bring it to its senses, quite frankly, it was because we understood the provisions and the implications of Bill 26 and the establishment of the hospital restructuring commission or, as I call it, the hospital closing commission. Because I knew, despite the fact that the Premier had said in May 1995, during the election campaign, "I can guarantee you, Robert," referring to Robert Fisher of Global TV, "it is not my plan to close hospitals" — "I can guarantee you it is not my plan to close hospitals," is actually what he said.

This commission guarantees that somebody is closing hospitals and the reason the government established it was to play the role of Pontius Pilate, simply washing its hands of the closing of hospitals in this province, simply taking its fingerprints off the decisions which are made to close hospitals, and the problem is the commission. My colleagues have both made reference to the fact it is the commission we're stuck with.

We hear sometimes that the commission is hands-off, nobody can talk to it, nobody can try to influence it, and then we find out that behind closed doors people are trying to influence it. Of course, that's what you're going to expect. When they're closing hospitals in somebody's riding, there's somebody going to try to influence the commission one way or the other. The rules apparently said that cabinet ministers can't do so. You ask the Minister of Health and you get one answer one day, another answer the next day. But I go back to the fact that the problem is the hospital closing commission that we have under Duncan Sinclair, which shouldn't be in existence. It should be disbanded, it should never have been set up in the first place.

If the government thinks it should close hospitals, it should take the heat for closing hospitals. I don't think they should be closing hospitals in the province. Certainly the people who are supporters of Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby, the Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital, the Port Colborne hospital, and the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines, all of which are under the axe — not of this commission but of another commission — those people don't like the establishment of this commission and don't want hospitals closed and don't want the role of those hospitals radically changed, and that's what may happen. They may keep them open, there may be a building standing there, but the hospital may not have many services to provide to people, and that's not satisfactory.

The people who are adherents to the General hospital — I support the General hospital, the Hotel Dieu and the Shaver Hospital in St Catharines. We need all of them in our community, but we have a hospital restructuring commission that could show up and say, "We're not only closing those, we're going to close more hospitals."

While the rules say ministers can't try to influence this, what do you expect is going to happen? Of course that's going to happen when you have a hospital closing commission. Yet there's a violation as a result of that. What was the answer? Don't set the silly hospital closing commission up in the first place. Get rid of it as soon as possible. Put the funding back in to the health care system in terms of hospital funding in this province. You would find there would be support for that option. That's the option which I support.

This matter is going to the Legislative Assembly committee if this motion is approved today. It will, I know, totally impartially and without any partisan considerations, deal with this matter. I am confident that there will not be instructions from the Premier's office, the whip's office and the government House leader's office simply to do the bidding of the backroom boys in the Premier's office. I'm so confident that that is the case — it would be the first time, mind you, but where there is life, there is hope.

We can also hope this matter comes back to this assembly after the Legislative Assembly committee deals with it, for the purpose of dealing with it in a debate in this assembly. That makes logical, good sense that it finally be dealt with by this assembly, and I'm very confident the government will see the wisdom of the amendment which was placed by my friend and colleague the member for Downsview.

I hope our amendment is supported. I hope the government disbands the silly and destructive hospital closing commission and I hope the government has learned its lesson with the provisions of Bill 26.

**1720**

**Mr Wildman:** Other members have said, and I concur with their feeling, that we rise today to participate in this debate with some feeling of regret. I say that sincerely. I recall standing in this place in 1986 when my good friend — and I mean that sincerely, because he is a good friend — from Cochrane North at that time, the Honourable René Fontaine, announced he was resigning, not only from the executive council, but he chose, I think unnecessarily at that particular point, to resign his seat over a conflict of interest he had found himself in as a cabinet minister.

At that time, I expressed regret that the member had taken this action and had gotten himself into a situation which he then felt required him to take that action. I said at that time that I believed he perhaps should have tendered his resignation as a member of the executive council but that I didn't think it was necessary for him to resign his seat in this assembly. He chose to do that.

He subsequently ran in a by-election. Neither of the other two parties opposed him in that by-election and he was returned to the assembly to represent the people of Cochrane North, until he decided at the subsequent general election not to run in the campaign. We now have, as the member for Cochrane North, Mr Wood, who has represented those constituents very well.

I think the current member would share my view that René Fontaine is a friend of his, as he is of mine and many other members of this House, and that we regretted that he, finding himself in a conflict, chose to resign. But as I said at the time, I believed he did have to resign from the executive council.

That's why I find it so troubling that in this particular situation, the member for St George-St David, finding himself being criticized by the Integrity Commissioner, does not himself take a course of action similar to that taken by the former member for Cochrane North and other members who have found themselves in this kind of situation from time to time over the years serving the public.

As I said, I would probably concur with the view of the commissioner that it is not necessary for the member for St George-St David to resign his seat in the assembly, but I do believe — not just because of what happened in the particular instance that was criticized by the commissioner in his report, but the other incidents this minister has found himself in because of actions he has taken or that people have taken in his ministry, in his name, that have been criticized by the Speaker and by others as being in some cases viewed as a contempt, in other cases actually breaking the law, as in this one.

I believe that the member, who has been criticized by the commissioner for a "flagrant" transgression, to use the commissioner's word, should have tendered his resignation. Failing that, it was incumbent upon the Premier, the person who determines who should serve in the executive council, who should be a member of cabinet, to have exercised his responsibility and to have requested the resignation from the executive council of the member for St George-St David.

Because the Premier chose not to do that, I believe the Premier has lowered the standards by which we judge members of the executive council. I think that's unfortunate. I think it's unfortunate for this government, I think it's unfortunate for the assembly, and I think it's unfortunate for the people of Ontario.

I won't take long in saying that I support the referral of this matter to the Legislative Assembly committee to comply with the law, the Members' Integrity Act, which says this matter must be considered and responded to by the assembly within 30 days after the report is made, which means by July 25; and also because I'm confident that the government is serious — I hope the government is serious — about having a real discussion of the situation and having the committee deal in a non-partisan way with a very important report by the commissioner.

I must say, I don't support that portion of the motion, although I will not vote against it for this reason, which says that the committee should consider the report and respond directly to the Integrity Commissioner. That is just ridiculous. Since when do commissioners, who are officers of this assembly, receive reports from the assembly? The Integrity Commissioner or the Provincial Auditor or any of the other commissioners who are set up by this assembly, who are appointed by this assembly, are there to give advice to the members of the House, to give advice to the assembly and to make reports to the assembly, not the other way around. It's completely ridiculous that this government should say the committee of this assembly should make a report to the commissioner. What on earth for? The commissioner has already made his report.

The Premier has argued that the Attorney General should get some clarification from the commissioner. I don't think that's really necessary, but if the government wants to do that, they can do that. The committee does not report to the commissioner. But I'll leave that, if the government wants to do that, as long as the government recognizes and accepts that part of the motion which says the committee will report to the assembly. If the committee reports to the assembly, those of us who have been in this place for a while know that the report is then debatable. That means there must be a debate in this assembly on that report. In that way, the assembly will be complying with the law; it will be responding to the commissioner's report.

For that reason, I support the friendly amendment that was put forward by my friend from Downsview, which basically said there should be at least a one-day debate. I would hope the members of the government will accept that friendly amendment so it will clarify and make very clear to all concerned that when the committee reports to the assembly there will be a debate. To suggest that it only be one day is most reasonable.

I want to comment very briefly on a couple of things the government House leader said when he introduced his motion. The government House leader and the government failed to acknowledge the differences in roles of an MPP and a cabinet minister. They also failed to acknowledge the role of the commissioner. The government House leader, in making his comments, said the Members' Integrity Act sets out four possible sanctions that the commissioner can recommend if an MPP transgresses. Then he pointed out that the commissioner in this

particular case stated in his report that none of those actions should be taken. They range in severity right up to the point of having the MPP removed from his seat in the Assembly.

It is true that in this particular case the commissioner said the member for St George-St David should not be punished, should not be subject to the sanctions that are listed in the act. But the House leader either misunderstands or chooses to misunderstand that the commissioner and the act under which he carries out his responsibilities do not deal with an MPP's role as a member of the executive council. The act deals with the MPP's role as a member of the Assembly, a member representing a constituency.

**1730**

The commissioner has made very clear that he cannot make recommendations about the fitness or otherwise of an MPP to be a member of the executive council. That is the responsibility of the Premier. The Premier appoints and, to use a euphemism, disappoints members of the executive council. It is the Premier's responsibility to ensure that members of the executive council are not in conflict, that their behaviour is aboveboard and that they are in fact demonstrating the kind of integrity that is required of any member who aspires to hold such high office. It is the Premier's responsibility.

To hang everything, as the government has been trying to do, on the fact that the commissioner did not recommend a sanction under the act is to ignore the fact that the commissioner was only talking about the member for St George-St David in that capacity, as the MPP representing the constituents of St George-St David. He was not ruling, and could not rule or recommend, on his position as a member of the cabinet, and he said so.

The government House leader also pointed out that the commissioner said in his report that the member for St George-St David was acting in good faith. Well, forgive me, but oftentimes people act in good faith but they are wrong. When someone does something that is a flagrant transgression, that is flagrantly breaking the law, even if the individual acted in good faith, there may have to be a sanction, and should be a sanction. That is why my friend the former member for Cochrane North took the action he did, because as an honourable member he recognized that he had broken the rules and he should pay for it. That is why the Premier at that time accepted the resignation. We've seen other examples of that in this House over the years.

I'll just close by making a couple of comments. I think it's unfortunate that the motion as presented by the government House leader does not set forward the terms of reference of the committee. The government House leader argues that committees set their own agendas, that subcommittees work together and make recommendations to committees on how the committee will operate, what they will do, and that it's not the role of the House leaders to intervene.

I agree that that is true, but only to a certain extent, because all of us in this House understand that the way committees work in this majority House and in other majority Houses I've seen is that they are whipped. They even appoint somebody, a member of the committee, of the majority, who is the whip for the majority. That whip determines what the members on the government side in the committee do or don't do. The government whip and the government House leader both know that.

From my point of view, if the government House leader and the government whip and the cabinet are going to give parameters to the committee members, the majority members on the committee, behind the scenes, that is far less preferable than for the assembly to set the parameters right now so that we all know and it's all aboveboard: "This is what the committee can do; this is what we don't want it to do." I think that should be clear.

In my view, the member for St George-St David must appear before the committee. I understand that he has stated outside of the House today that he'd be willing to do that. I also believe the Minister of Health must appear before the committee. The Minister of Health must be a witness before this committee because he has given conflicting answers, contradictory answers in this House as to whether or not an MPP or a cabinet minister can contact the hospital restructuring committee about hospitals in their own riding. He said on one day, "Yes, it's quite all right," and then on another said, "No, it's not proper." That has to be clarified.

When I served as a minister of the crown, it was made clear to me right from the outset that any commission that is appointed by the government to make rulings or to make judgements that then could be appealed to cabinet was out of bounds for me as a cabinet minister in terms of intervention. That was clear. It was made clear to all members of cabinet that if a commission is set up by the government to independently make decisions, which decisions could then subsequently be appealed by an aggrieved party to cabinet, it's quite improper for cabinet ministers to contact such a commission. That's clear. Obviously this cabinet minister didn't know that or, if he did, he contravened that regulation, that requirement. That's very serious. But since the Minister of Health has given conflicting views on this very matter in this House, I think it's important for the minister to appear.

It might also be argued that it would be useful to have the commissioner appear — I don't know — so that the commissioner could make it very clear as to what his role is in terms of rulings or recommendations with regard to sanctions of MPPs who are also members of the executive council. My understanding is that the commissioner has said that is beyond his terms of reference; it is beyond his jurisdiction. Because of that, I would be prepared to move an amendment on behalf of my caucus.

Just prior to moving the amendment, I want to state that I expect the government will support this amendment as a friendly amendment, particularly since the member for St George-St David has said he intends to appear before the committee, because the purpose of the amendment is to require him to do that, along with the Minister of Health.

With that, I would move that the motion be amended by adding the following:

"And further, in the opinion of this assembly, proper consideration of the Integrity Commissioner's report will require the participation of the Minister of Health and the member for St George-St David as committee witnesses."

That is of course an amendment to the amendment.

**1740**

**The Acting Speaker:** I would like to accommodate what has to be done. This most recent amendment by Mr Wildman purports to amend the amendment, and it doesn't. I would like to either clear up the amendment that was there before so this can be properly put or seek unanimous consent that we would accept this as an amendment to the amendment.

Is it agreed that Mr Wildman's amendment is to amend the amendment? It is agreed, and I will read it.

Mr Wildman has moved that the amendment be amended by adding the following:

"And further, in the opinion of this assembly, proper consideration of the Integrity Commissioner's report will require the participation of the Minister of Health and the member for St George-St David as committee witnesses."

Further debate?

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Very briefly, because time is short and I just want to make a couple of points. I look forward to this issue going to the Legislative Assembly committee, not because I relish the debate we're going to get into there but because I believe it's incumbent that we clear up at least a couple of points.

The first point is this question that's been raised by other members, and that is the distinction between MPP and minister. My strong belief, supported by my understanding of the commissioner's position on this — and this is one of the reasons I believe it's important for the commissioner to either attend or provide us with this clarification — is that the commissioner cannot make any recommendations with respect to penalties as they relate to someone's membership in cabinet. That remains the responsibility and the prerogative of the Premier, and that's something the Premier has not discharged appropriately in this case.

Second, I believe it's incumbent upon us to also look at this question of what the rules are, not necessarily get into a major discussion here about whether we need to change any of the rules. I have to tell you, I have some sympathy for the position in which the Minister of Municipal Affairs finds himself. I don't agree with what he's done, I disagree; I think he has taken the wrong course in not resigning. But I understand that as an MPP he would, particularly in a case like the closing of hospitals, want to be able to advocate on behalf of his constituents. If we can assist in providing some clarification on that question, I believe that will be useful.

As it stands right now, in my view, that would warrant a changing of the rules. Right now, the commissioner I believe has interpreted the rules in this case as he has consistently, which is to say that as a member of cabinet you have limitations on what you can do. You cannot simply, by putting something on your MPP's letterhead, pretend you are no longer a member of cabinet. That is a very serious issue and I think it's something we need to turn our minds to.

In this case, if time allowed I would go on, but I won't. I'll have an opportunity in committee, if this motion is passed, to deal with these issues and others. I regret very much that we are having to do this. I regret very much that the minister did not do the appropriate thing, I regret very much that the Premier did not do the appropriate thing and that we now are left in this position of having to resort to the House taking on this role, in this case through the Legislative Assembly committee.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I'll be very brief, for the reasons my colleague from Dovercourt has outlined, as well as the fact that we're hoping to get to private bills today. One of those is Pr51, my bill affecting my home town of Hamilton, an important bill, and I don't want to see us miss the chance to get to that. I'm hopeful that the House leaders have been able to find a way to reach agreement and we can deal with that today. If we don't, once again somebody gets stiffed by the improper choices of this government in terms of their priorities. But I'm going to remain hopeful that in the spirit of two days ago, we will do that.

The only point I want to make is that first of all, government members, especially in the back benches, who haven't been through this before need to appreciate that what is happening here in terms of holding ministers accountable is part of the tradition of this place, part of the tradition of parliamentary democracy. I now know what it's like on both sides of the House. I know what it's like when you feel that one of your ministers is under attack. It always feels unreasonable. Rarely are things very stark in terms of black and white; there is always a lot of grey area. When you're on the government side, the grey area for you is that it's unreasonable, "It's the mean-spirited opposition who hate us and want to get at us," and when you're over here, it's a question of accountability. As I say, now on this side I can appreciate why one goes after these things in as tough a fashion as oppositions do, as we are on this issue.

My opinion on this is that the minister at the very least — speaking to our amendment about the minister participating in the hearings — needs to come forward and answer a couple of things that are important in this issue. One is the fact that this is the minister's third time for a major infraction of a rule or convention or tradition in this place. There is a point at which, if the minister, through the Premier, isn't being held accountable, then this Legislature has to hold ministers accountable.

When you are a member of the cabinet, you lose the right to act in whatever way you please whenever you please, regardless of how well-meaning your intent might be. It's because of the office, because of the authority, the influence that ministers have in our system, and there has to be that accountability. Unfortunately, because of the politics of having to take down two other ministers in this case, politically the Premier now feels he is going to try and tough this out. That's inappropriate for the one reason I have mentioned.

The second one is that it's incumbent on all ministers — my House leader from Algoma mentioned that once you're sworn in as a minister, it's drilled into your head on that first day and every day after that, by your own personal staff and by your deputy minister, that you be very careful and you check in as many ways as possible before you take any action — any action. With experience, you don't need to check the obvious sorts of things, but I'll tell you, particularly in the case of justice ministries, when you don't have a legal background, as I didn't, you don't even stand up and pour a coffee the

first day without making sure that what you are about to do is not going to get you or, more important, your government into some hot water.

We see from the record that on May 27, Pat Hoy, a member of the Liberal caucus, contacted the commissioner and said: "I'm thinking of writing to the Health Services Restructuring Commission regarding a hospital in my riding. Would you tell me if that's appropriate?" I think the member, being a backbencher and not a minister, deserves a lot of credit for the level of integrity he is setting for himself, the standard he sets.

For a minister not to check — if you look at the record, the commissioner has been consulted many times by many ministers. That's why he's there. He even sends out memos to ministers in the executive council saying: "Please contact me. That's why I'm here. I urge you to do it." This minister didn't do that.

The Integrity Commissioner's report says it's "a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention." We have the commissioner stating:

"In my opinion, Mr Leach is having difficulty in adopting an attitude which is less confrontational, more consistent with is present office as a member of the executive council," meaning cabinet, "and more appreciative of the parliamentary conventions associated therewith.

"I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach contravened the Members' Integrity Act."

The Premier ought to be accepting an offered resignation from that minister in this case. That is so clear. In the absence of that, the very least that ought to happen is that there ought to be this review by the legislative committee; there ought to be a provision that the ministers affected will come forward, including the commissioner, if necessary, to clarify some of the meaning around the comments he's made publicly; and at the end of the day, it should report back here to this place, not to the commissioner, who really can't do much with it, but back here to us. That's the very least that ought to happen.

Let's keep in mind that the only reason this got here today is because the government had to bring back the road safety bill, which they didn't think was as important as ramming through their anti-democratic rules to effectively muzzle the opposition. Because they had to come back and take care of that political time bomb, they knew they had to deal with this integrity report. Otherwise, it wouldn't even be here. That is a shame on not just the Premier and the government House leader but all the members of the government who didn't say something in caucus that could have provided for a more honourable course of action.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I believe, at least I'll ask, that we have unanimous consent to complete the vote on this matter — a five-minute bell, is it? — to complete private bills 75 through 84 and to deal with the motion of adjournment.

**Mr Christopherson:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** A point of order? The difficulty I have is that when they seek unanimous consent I'm supposed to just put the question. That's the difficulty I'm faced with.

**Mr Christopherson:** I just want to ask the government House leader for some clarification.

**The Speaker:** Okay, go ahead.

**Mr Christopherson:** All I want to do is clarify with the government House leader, through the Speaker, that it's not the private members' bill numbers you just read out but rather government orders. Is that correct? I'm trying to ensure that Bill 51, affecting the city of Hamilton, is included.

**Hon David Johnson:** You're absolutely right. My mistake. Yes, it's Bills 51, 63, 64, 73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 82 and 83.

**Mr Bradley:** That includes four opposition hostages.

**Hon David Johnson:** That includes four opposition bills.

**The Speaker:** The government House leader has moved unanimous consent to deal with the votes on this motion, the bills he just outlined and the adjournment motion, and that there be a five-minute bell for the votes. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Wildman has moved that the amendment be amended by adding the following:

"And further, in the opinion of this assembly, proper consideration of the Integrity Commissioner's report will require the participation of the Minister of Health and the member for St George-St David as committee witnesses."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1754 to 1759.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bisson, Gilles | Conway, Sean G. | McLeod, Lyn |
| Boyd, Marion | Kennedy, Gerard | Ruprecht, Tony |
| Bradley, James J. | Kormos, Peter | Silipo, Tony |
| Castrilli, Annamarie | Lankin, Frances | Wildman, Bud |
| Christopherson, David | Marchese, Rosario | Wood, Len |
| Churley, Marilyn | Martin, Tony | |

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Baird, John R. | Hodgson, Chris | Sampson, Rob |
| Barrett, Toby | Johns, Helen | Saunderson, William |
| Bassett, Isabel | Johnson, Bert | Shea, Derwyn |
| Boushy, Dave | Johnson, David | Sheehan, Frank |
| Brown, Jim | Kells, Morley | Skarica, Toni |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Klees, Frank | Spina, Joseph |
| Clement, Tony | Leach, Al | Sterling, Norman W. |
| DeFaria, Carl | Marland, Margaret | Stewart, R. Gary |
| Doyle, Ed | Martiniuk, Gerry | Tascona, Joseph N. |
| Ecker, Janet | Munro, Julia | Tilson, David |
| Elliott, Brenda | Mushinski, Marilyn | Turnbull, David |
| Froese, Tom | Newman, Dan | Vankoughnet, Bill |
| Gilchrist, Steve | Ouellette, Jerry J. | Wettlaufer, Wayne |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Parker, John L. | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Harris, Michael D. | Rollins, E.J. Douglas | Young, Terence H. |
| Hastings, John | Ross, Lillian | |

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 17; the nays are 47.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

Ms Castrilli has moved that the motion be amended by adding the following:

"And further, in the opinion of this assembly, that the report from the committee be debated in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for one sessional day."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye.

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Same vote? The ayes are 17; the nays are 47. I declare the motion lost.

Mr Johnson has moved government notice of motion number 29. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

## CITY OF HAMILTON ACT, 1997

Mr Christopherson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr51, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Christopherson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr51, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA TRUST COMPANY ACT, 1996

Ms Bassett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr63, An Act respecting the Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company, Montreal Trust Company of Canada and Montreal Trust Company.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr63, An Act respecting The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company, Montreal Trust Company of Canada and Montreal Trust Company.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA ACT, 1996

Ms Bassett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr64, An Act respecting the National Ballet of Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr64, An Act respecting the National Ballet of Canada.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## CITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1996

Ms Castrilli, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr73, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Castrilli, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr73, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## 4588 BATHURST ACT, 1997

Ms Bassett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr74, An Act respecting 4588 Bathurst.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr74, An Act respecting 4588 Bathurst.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## 750 SPADINA AVENUE ASSOCIATION ACT, 1997

Ms Bassett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr75, An Act respecting 750 Spadina Avenue Association.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr75, An Act respecting 750 Spadina Avenue Association.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIAGARA FALLS ACT, 1997

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Maves, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr80, An Act respecting the Young Women's Christian Association of Niagara Falls.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Maves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr80, An Act respecting the Young Women's Christian Association of Niagara Falls.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## CHINESE CULTURAL CENTRE OF GREATER TORONTO FOUNDATION ACT, 1997

Ms Castrilli, on behalf of Mr Curling, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr81, An Act respecting the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto Foundation.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Castrilli, on behalf of Mr Curling, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr81, An Act respecting the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto Foundation.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT CREDIT COUNSELLING SERVICES ACT, 1997

Ms Castrilli, on behalf of Mr Crozier, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr82, An Act respecting the Ontario Association of Not-For-Profit Credit Counselling Services.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Castrilli, on behalf of Mr Crozier, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr82, An Act respecting the Ontario Association of Not-For-Profit Credit Counselling Services.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION (ONTARIO) INC. ACT, 1997

Mr Tascona moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr83, An Act respecting the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (Ontario) Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Tascona moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr83, An Act respecting the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (Ontario) Inc.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## HOUSE SITTING

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I move that when the House adjourns today, it stand adjourned until Monday, August 18, 1997, as ordered on Tuesday, June 24, 1997, the terms and conditions provided by that order to apply.

Do I need to ask for unanimous consent to put this motion forward?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put this motion forward. Agreed? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, August 18, 1997.

*The House adjourned at 1813.*

## ERRATA

| No. | Page | Column | Line | Should read: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 209B | 11001 | 2 | 4 | very little dollars — I don't know, $5,000, $10,000 at |
| 209B | 11002 | 1 | 33 | are reasonable and fair. It recognizes that a number of |
| 212B | 11246 | 1 | 2 | we have in this House, I can go on for another four |
| 212B | 11246 | 1 | 41-2 | **Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Why don't you go home and put your child to bed. |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Constituency<br>Circonscription | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti |
|---|---|
| Algoma | Wildman, Bud (ND) |
| Algoma-Manitoulin | Brown, Michael A. (L) |
| Beaches-Woodbine | Lankin, Frances (ND) |
| Brampton North / -Nord | Spina, Joseph (PC) |
| Brampton South / -Sud | Clement, Tony (PC) |
| Brant-Haldimand | Preston, Peter L. (PC) |
| Brantford | Johnson, Ron (PC) |
| Bruce | Fisher, Barbara (PC) |
| Burlington South / -Sud | **Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des pernonnes âgées) |
| Cambridge | Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) |
| Carleton | **Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.** (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Carleton East / -Est | Morin, Gilles E. (L) |
| Chatham-Kent | Carroll, Jack (PC) |
| Cochrane North / -Nord | Wood, Len (ND) |
| Cochrane South / -Sud | Bisson, Gilles (ND) |
| Cornwall | Cleary, John C. (L) |
| Don Mills | **Johnson, Hon / L'hon David** (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Dovercourt | Silipo, Tony (ND) |
| Downsview | Castrilli, Annamarie (L) |
| Dufferin-Peel | Tilson, David (PC) |
| Durham Centre / -Centre | Flaherty, Jim (PC) |
| Durham East / -Est | O'Toole, John R. (PC) |
| Durham West / -Ouest | **Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet** (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Durham-York | Munro, Julia (PC) |
| Eglinton | **Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William** (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Elgin | North, Peter (Ind) |
| Essex-Kent | Hoy, Pat (L) |
| Essex South / -Sud | Crozier, Bruce (L) |
| Etobicoke-Humber | Ford, Douglas B. (PC) |
| Etobicoke-Lakeshore | Kells, Morley (PC) |
| Etobicoke-Rexdale | Hastings, John (PC) |
| Etobicoke West / -Ouest | **Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris** (PC) Speaker / Président |
| Fort William | McLeod, Lyn (L) |
| Fort York | Marchese, Rosario (ND) |
| Frontenac-Addington | Vankoughnet, Bill (PC) |
| Grey-Owen Sound | Murdoch, Bill (PC) |
| Guelph | Elliott, Brenda (PC) |
| Halton Centre / -Centre | Young, Terence H. (PC) |
| Halton North / -Nord | Chudleigh, Ted (PC) |
| Hamilton Centre / -Centre | Christopherson, David (ND) |
| Hamilton East / -Est | Agostino, Dominic (L) |
| Hamilton Mountain | Pettit, Trevor (PC) |
| Hamilton West / -Ouest | Ross, Lillian (PC) |
| Hastings-Peterborough | Danford, Harry (PC) |
| High Park-Swansea | Shea, Derwyn (PC) |
| Huron | Johns, Helen (PC) |
| Kenora | Miclash, Frank (L) |
| Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles | Gerretsen, John (L) |
| Kitchener | Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC) |
| Kitchener-Wilmot | Leadston, Gary L. (PC) |
| Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon | Pouliot, Gilles (ND) |
| Lambton | Beaubien, Marcel (PC) |
| Lanark-Renfrew | Jordan, W. Leo (PC) |
| Lawrence | Cordiano, Joseph (L) |
| Leeds-Grenville | **Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.** (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels |
| Lincoln | Sheehan, Frank (PC) |
| London Centre / -Centre | Boyd, Marion (ND) |
| London North / -Nord | **Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne** (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| London South / -Sud | Wood, Bob (PC) |
| Markham | **Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.** (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Middlesex | Smith, Bruce (PC) |
| Mississauga East / -Est | DeFaria, Carl (PC) |
| Mississauga North / -Nord | **Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John** (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Mississauga South / -Sud | Marland, Margaret (PC) |
| Mississauga West / -Ouest | **Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation) |
| Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne | Grimmett, Bill (PC) |
| Nepean | Baird, John R. (PC) |
| Niagara Falls | Maves, Bart (PC) |
| Niagara South / -Sud | Hudak, Tim (PC) |
| Nickel Belt | Laughren, Floyd (ND) |
| Nipissing | **Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.** (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif |
| Norfolk | Barrett, Toby (PC) |
| Northumberland | Galt, Doug (PC) |
| Oakville South / -Sud | Carr, Gary (PC) |
| Oakwood | Colle, Mike (L) |
| Oriole | Vacant |
| Oshawa | Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) |
| Ottawa Centre / -Centre | Patten, Richard (L) |
| Ottawa East / -Est | Grandmaître, Bernard (L) |
| Ottawa-Rideau | Guzzo, Garry J. (PC) |
| Ottawa South / -Sud | McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition |
| Ottawa West / -Ouest | Chiarelli, Robert (L) |
| Oxford | Hardeman, Ernie (PC) |

| Constituency<br>Circonscription | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti |
|---|---|
| Parkdale | Ruprecht, Tony (L) |
| Parry Sound | **Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.** (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances |
| Perth | Johnson, Bert (PC) |
| Peterborough | Stewart, R. Gary (PC) |
| Port Arthur | Gravelle, Michael (L) |
| Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell | Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) |
| Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud | Fox, Gary (PC) |
| Quinte | Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC) |
| Rainy River | Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Renfrew North / -Nord | Conway, Sean G. (L) |
| Riverdale | Churley, Marilyn (ND) |
| S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est | **Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble** (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones |
| St Andrew-St Patrick | Bassett, Isabel (PC) |
| St Catharines | Bradley, James J. (L) |
| St Catharines-Brock | Froese, Tom (PC) |
| St George-St David | **Leach, Hon / L'hon Al** (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Sarnia | Boushy, Dave (PC) |
| Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie | Martin, Tony (ND) |
| Scarborough-Agincourt | Phillips, Gerry (L) |
| Scarborough Centre / -Centre | Newman, Dan (PC) |
| Scarborough East / -Est | Gilchrist, Steve (PC) |
| Scarborough-Ellesmere | **Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn** (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Scarborough North / -Nord | Curling, Alvin (L) |
| Scarborough West / -Ouest | Brown, Jim (PC) |
| Simcoe Centre / -Centre | Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) |
| Simcoe East / -Est | McLean, Allan K. (PC) |
| Simcoe West / -Ouest | **Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim** (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé |
| Sudbury | Bartolucci, Rick (L) |
| Sudbury East / -Est | Martel, Shelley (ND) |
| Timiskaming | Ramsay, David (L) |
| Victoria-Haliburton | **Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris** (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Waterloo North / -Nord | **Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth** (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail |
| Welland-Thorold | Kormos, Peter (ND) |
| Wellington | Arnott, Ted (PC) |
| Wentworth East / -Est | Doyle, Ed (PC) |
| Wentworth North / -Nord | Skarica, Toni (PC) |
| Willowdale | **Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles** (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Wilson Heights | Kwinter, Monte (L) |
| Windsor-Riverside | Vacant |
| Windsor-Sandwich | Pupatello, Sandra (L) |
| Windsor-Walkerville | Duncan, Dwight (L) |
| York Centre / -Centre | **Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al** (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports |
| York East / -Est | Parker, John L. (PC) |
| York Mills | Turnbull, David (PC) |
| York-Mackenzie | Klees, Frank (PC) |
| Yorkview | Sergio, Mario (L) |
| York South / -Sud | Kennedy, Gerard (L) |

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

*continued from overleaf*

OTHER BUSINESS

**House sitting**
Mr David Johnson . . . . . 11286
Agreed to . . . . . 11286

**Errata** . . . . . 11286

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 3 juillet 1997

TROISIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur un ensemble complet de mesures visant la sécurité routière,** projet de loi 138, *M. Palladini*
Adoptée . . . . . 11285

SANCTION ROYALE
La lieutenante-gouverneure . . 11273

# CONTENTS

## Thursday 3 July 1997


MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Caruso Club Italian Festival**
Mr Bartolucci . . . . . 11249
**Toronto Fringe theatre festival**
Mr Silipo . . . . . 11249
**Adrian Mucalov**
Mrs Munro . . . . . 11249
**Standing orders reform**
Mr Curling . . . . . 11249
Mr Bradley . . . . . 11250
**Municipal restructuring**
Ms Churley . . . . . 11250
Ms Lankin . . . . . 11250
**Tax cut**
Mr Baird . . . . . 11250
**Community care**
Mr Bert Johnson . . . . . 11251

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Children's services**
Mrs Ecker . . . . . 11251
Mrs McLeod . . . . . 11252
Ms Lankin . . . . . 11253

ORAL QUESTIONS

**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Phillips . . . . . 11253
Mr Runciman . . . . . 11354
**Sunnybrook Health Science Centre**
Mr Kennedy . . . . . 11254
Mr Eves . . . . . 11255
**Report, Integrity Commissioner**
Mr Hampton . . . . . 11255
Mr Eves . . . . . 11255
**Ministry of Transportation contracts**
Mr Hampton . . . . . 11256
Mr Palladini . . . . . 11256
**Services for abused women**
Mrs McLeod . . . . . 11257
Mrs Cunningham . . . . . 11257
**Road safety**
Mr Bisson . . . . . 11257
Mr Palladini . . . . . 11258
Mr Chudleigh . . . . . 11258
**Emergency services**
Mr Conway . . . . . 11258
Mr Eves . . . . . 11258
**By-election in Windsor-Riverside**
Mr Hampton . . . . . 11259
Mr Eves . . . . . 11259
**Sexual assault**
Mr Bert Johnson . . . . . 11259
Mrs Cunningham . . . . . 11259
**School bus safety**
Mr Hoy . . . . . 11260
Mr Palladini . . . . . 11260
**Special education**
Mr Wildman . . . . . 11260
Mr Snobelen . . . . . 11260
**Occupational health and safety**
Mrs Ross . . . . . 11261
Mrs Witmer . . . . . 11261
**Red Hill Creek Expressway**
Mr Agostino . . . . . 11261
Mr Palladini . . . . . 11261

PETITIONS

**Education reform**
Mr Ruprecht . . . . . 11262
**Occupational health and safety**
Mr Christopherson . . . 11262, 11263, 11265
**Court decision**
Mr Ouellette . . . . . 11263
Mr Bert Johnson . . . . . 11263
**North York Branson Hospital**
Mr Kwinter . . . . . 11263
**Kidney dialysis**
Mr Cleary . . . . . 11263
**Occupational health clinics**
Mr Christopherson . . . . . 11264
**Water chlorination**
Mr Chudleigh . . . . . 11264
**Mandatory inquests**
Mr Bartolucci . . . . . 11264
**Rural health services**
Mr Barrett . . . . . 11265
**Standing orders reform**
Mr Bradley . . . . . 11265

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

**Standing committee on the Legislative Assembly**
Mr Tascona . . . . . 11265
Report presented . . . . . 11265

THIRD READINGS

**Comprehensive Road Safety Act,** Bill 138, *Mr Palladini*
Mr Palladini . . . . . 11265, 11272
Mrs Marland . . . . . 11266
Mr Duncan . . . . . 11267
Mr Conway . . . . . 11269
Mr Bradley . . . . . 11270
Mr Bisson . . . . . 11271
Mr Wildman . . . . . 11272

ROYAL ASSENT

The Lieutenant Governor . . . 11273

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

**Report, Integrity Commissioner,** government notice of motion number 29, *Mr David Johnson*
Mr David Johnson . . . . . 11273
Ms Castrilli . . . . . 11274
Mr Kennedy . . . . . 11277
Mr Bradley . . . . . 11280
Mr Wildman . . . . . 11280
Mr Silipo . . . . . 11283
Mr Christopherson . . . . . 11283
Agreed to . . . . . 11285

SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

**City of Hamilton Act, 1997**
Bill Pr51, *Mr Christopherson*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company Act, 1996**
Bill Pr63, *Ms Bassett*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**National Ballet of Canada Act, 1996**
Bill Pr64, *Ms Bassett*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**City of Ottawa Act, 1996,**
Bill Pr73, *Mr Grandmaître*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**4588 Bathurst Act, 1997**
Bill Pr74, *Ms Bassett*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**750 Spadina Avenue Association Act, 1997,** Bill Pr75, *Ms Bassett*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**Young Women's Christian Association of Niagara Falls Act, 1997,** Bill Pr80, *Mr Maves*
Agreed to . . . . . 11285
**Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto Foundation Act, 1997,** Bill Pr81, *Mr Curling*
Agreed to . . . . . 11286
**Ontario Association of Not-For-Profit Credit Counselling Services Act, 1997,** Bill Pr82, *Mr Crozier*
Agreed to . . . . . 11286
**Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (Ontario) Inc Act, 1997,** Bill Pr83, *Mr Tascona*
Agreed to . . . . . 11286


*continued overleaf*

CA20N1
X1
-D23

Government
Publication

No. 214

Nº 214

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Monday 18 August 1997**

**Lundi 18 août 1997**

LIBRARY
AUG 25 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Présidente
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

**Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

**Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

**Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

**Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

**Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 18 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 18 août 1997

The House met at 1331.

*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'd like to recognize a significant event that took place over the last few days, and that was the recognition of the anniversary of 50 years of independence in India.

I think all of us recall, and certainly all of us have read about, the struggle of the freedom fighters to establish that democracy led by Mahatma Gandhi, and we all are familiar with the enormous success of that struggle. Mahatma Gandhi's legend lives on, of course. Two of the great struggles in the recent past, the civil rights movement in the US led by Martin Luther King and the struggle in South Africa led by Nelson Mandela, both follow the principles of Mahatma Gandhi.

We also on the weekend recognized the tremendous accomplishments of India. I think Canada has much to learn from India, a country with 300 languages, multi-religion, and yet democracy continues to grow and to thrive there.

Over the weekend we also recognized the contribution of so many Canadians of Indian background: here in the Ontario government senior deputy ministers, but in every aspect of our life. I particularly wanted to say that I salute the committee that worked tirelessly. In our gallery are the members of that committee, led by Ajit Jain and R.K. Moorthy, as well as the rest of the committee. I wonder if the House might join in congratulating them on a fine accomplishment.

### SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I had the pleasure of joining my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt in some of the festivities that took place over the weekend around the 50th anniversary of India's independence. I hope all members of the House will join with us in offering best wishes to the Indo-Canadian/ Pakistani-Canadian communities on this, the 50th anniversary of their independence from the British Empire after a 200-year struggle.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the first south Asians to Canada. Over this century the south Asian community has contributed greatly to the Canadian mosaic. No major facet of Canadian life has gone untouched. Our commercial and cultural institutions have been greatly enriched by the many talents of these communities whose multicultural, multilinguistic and multireligious heritage date back at least 5,000 years. The people of the subcontinent have also made great strides in the last 50 years. Life expectancy, literacy and per capita income have all risen significantly.

Given recent signs of resolution of conflicts between these two great countries, I have great faith that the next 50 years will be even more promising if the challenges can be faced today.

I too would like to congratulate the leaders and the organizers from the committee for putting on a wonderful celebration this weekend. Congratulations.

### LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** It is with pride that I rise for the second time to once again offer congratulations to the High Park Braves, a little league baseball team. For the fourth year in a row the Braves have won the Ontario Little League championship. This team, made up entirely of 12-year-olds and with only two players returning from last year, represented Ontario at the national championships. They went through the round robin with a perfect five and zero record to advance to the finals.

While they were not victorious on this occasion, they have much to be proud of. Very few teams could even boast of making it once to the finals of the Canadian Major Little League championship, let alone four times. In the case of the High Park Braves, they won the Canadian championship on two of those occasions and advanced on behalf of Canada to the world series.

I would like to thank the parents, coaches and other volunteers who make our house leagues and rep teams across Ontario possible. These individuals give generously of their time to nourish and encourage our young people. In High Park-Swansea the strong support of our neighbourhood's many sports teams has done much more than simply organize games to the benefit of our youth; it has coalesced into a vibrant community spirit.

Once again it is my distinct honour to offer congratulations to the High Park Braves, Ontario champions in

little league baseball for the fourth year in a row. If I might be so bold as to speak for all my colleagues in the House, I think I can safely say that the players, the coaches, the parents and the community are all world-class winners.

## TOM DAVIES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** After 29 consecutive years in municipal politics, Ontario's longest-serving regional chair has decided to retire after this term. Tom Davies, chair of the Sudbury region, will not only be missed in the Sudbury basin, but he will be missed by politicians at all levels of government.

Being acclaimed as the chair of the Sudbury region for five consecutive terms indicates the amount of satisfaction, respect and love the people and politicians of the Sudbury region have for Tom. Tom was obsessed with improving our area's image. His main focus was always the good of the region and his main thrusts were its survival and growth. Tom believes in our youth and focused tireless energies in ensuring they had jobs in our region to return to.

Tom was, and continues to be, a mentor for all those around him. His ability to remain focused and to keep his priorities in tune with the ordinary person were two of the reasons he was so successful and so popular. For people, Tom exemplified what politics is all about. We all owe Tom a huge debt of gratitude.

To Tom, his wife, Sally, and children Craig, Ward, Susan, Gordon and Scott, thank you for your energy, your focus, your dedication and your commitment. It is now our turn to support Tom and his family. Good luck, dear friend.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I rise today having just completed the six measly days of public hearings that this government threw out by way of public consultation on Bill 99. Shameful, disgusted outrage was certainly the attitude of the literally hundreds of people who showed up in the public galleries in every community we were in and were not allowed to speak, couldn't get on the list. In fact, there were over 1,200 requests, and we met only a mere fraction.

**1340**

Finally, these people had had their fill of this arrogant government, and in Kingston the injured workers actually took over the committee hearings. Peter Boyle, the president of the Kingston and District Labour Council, placed the following resolution on the floor:

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of workers who have presented to the Ontario standing committee on resources development, which is holding public hearings on Bill 99, have testified that Bill 99 attacks injured workers in the name of greater profits and will lead to greater numbers of injuries and deaths in the workplace.... Therefore be it resolved that the participants at the Kingston public hearings on Bill 99 call on the labour movement, the injured worker movement and all progressive organizations to continue the fight against the concepts in Bill 99. They should use their resources to fight these regressive changes on the streets, in the workplace and to build support within their communities.... That fight begins here in Kingston."

That resolution was passed unanimously by the injured workers who were there, the very people this government denied the opportunity to say, "Shame on you."

## BERTHA MOORE AND HENRY PRICE

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I rise to address the House regarding two of Oshawa's most venerable citizens, who this month have celebrated their centennial birthdays.

Bertha Moore, a resident of Oshawa, celebrated her centennial birthday with friends and family on August 8. Ms Moore is a skilled artist and an active member of our community. Ms Moore has travelled extensively and is continually looking for new challenges. In recent years she has undertaken water ballet, and her competitive spirit enjoys the sound of saying "Bingo."

Henry Patton Price was born on August 12, 1897. Since coming to Canada in 1907 from Great Britain, Mr Price has contributed greatly to Canada and our community. As a signaller in the Canadian Forces during the Great War, Mr Price served with distinction in many of the war's fiercest theatres, such as Vimy Ridge and Dieppe. The signals section in which Mr Price served won the Dominion Trophy twice during his tour. Mr Price continued to apply the determination, dedication and pride in his efforts that he achieved during his military career through the two world wars to his civilian career with Canadian Pacific Telegraph and General Motors.

These two outstanding citizens have demonstrated dedication and commitment to their families, friends, community, province and country. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to meet and speak with both of them. I would like ask all to join me in congratulating Ms Bertha Moore and Mr Henry Price on their 100 years young.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Last week the Mike Harris Health Services Restructuring Commission arrived in Ottawa and did what its flawed mandate instructed it to do: close hospitals. In the wake of the closure of the Grace Hospital and the Riverside Hospital and the downgrading of the Montfort Hospital went $60 million of the region's health care dollars and the loss of some 1,200 front-line jobs: nurses, health care providers and hospital staff.

Evidence shows that moving certain health services to bigger units ultimately increases the costs and diminishes personal care. Closing smaller hospitals is the wrong way

to go. The closure of the Grace is an insult to its patient-focused care. The community outrage over its closure is understandable. While its costs are a bit higher than average for a community hospital, the Grace is really a small specialty hospital with excellent credentials that cannot be matched costwise at a bigger hospital. The Riverside is one of the most proficient hospitals in all of Canada, so if the purpose of the exercise was to improve efficiency, why close the most efficient hospital?

To add further insult to injury, this government will be forcing two more commissions, by way of Bill 136, on to the nurses, health care providers and hospital staff. Not only are you stripping the community of health care, you're stripping these workers of fairness in their workplaces.

The people of Ottawa feel betrayed by Mike Harris, and rightfully so. He has cut the heart and soul out of community hospital care in Ottawa.

## BAIL SUPERVISION PROGRAM

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** In mid-July, the Attorney General assumed responsibility for the bail verification and supervision program. The reason given was that the program fit the mandate of the ministry, and that is true. What didn't fit was the decision to operate only programs in southern Ontario and to shut down and shut out northerners who had been helped in Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste Marie.

In Sudbury, the Elizabeth Fry Society has operated a program since 1979. It has the overwhelming support of members of the defence bar, the crown attorneys and justices of the peace. In 1996 alone, the one and a half staff interviewed and verified information for the court for over 477 individuals. This had a significant positive impact in reducing the time crown attorneys needed to review cases.

Two hundred clients were also supervised by the same staff in 1996. That's 200 people who did not cost the corrections system a cent and who, because of bail conditions, got the counselling, anger management, drug and alcohol programs they needed to avoid further confrontation with the law. All this for a grand total of $86,000 to fund the program in Sudbury.

My questions to the Attorney General are: What specific criteria were used to determine which programs would operate? Who made the decision, as it is clear no one in Sudbury was consulted. Why did you discriminate against northern Ontario and how do you justify only southerners receiving access to the program? We deserve answers to these important questions.

## HEALTH CARE IN NIAGARA REGION

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** Last Monday, August 11, 1997, I was pleased to attend a major health care announcement in St Catharines. Referred to as the Breakthrough Healthcare Campaign, the announcement has implications for health care providers not only in the Niagara region but across the province as well. It shows what hospital foundations, charities and dedicated individuals can do when they put their community ahead of everything else. It also shows how important it is for communities to become partners with government in spearheading innovative and breakthrough health care initiatives.

Specifically, the St Catharines General Hospital Foundation, along with foundations for the Welland County General Hospital and the Greater Niagara General Hospital, announced a capital campaign to raise a minimum of $4.5 million, $1.85 million of which they already have in signed pledges.

At the heart of this campaign is to bring an MRI to Niagara region, which I announced last year, technology to support vascular surgery, a breast screening centre and the purchase of cardiac equipment. What particularly impressed me was the way all groups were dedicated to the process of working together for the benefit of the entire community, not one specific location or one specific hospital.

I want to congratulate everyone involved in this capital campaign for doing what is best for the entire Niagara region.

## ROYAL ASSENT

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Administrator of Ontario has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office on Monday, July 21, 1997.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill Pr51, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton

Bill Pr63, An Act respecting The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company, Montreal Trust Company of Canada and Montreal Trust Company

Bill Pr64, An Act respecting The National Ballet of Canada

Bill Pr73, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa

Bill Pr74, An Act respecting 4588 Bathurst

Bill Pr75, An Act respecting 750 Spadina Avenue Association

Bill Pr80, An Act respecting the Young Women's Christian Association of Niagara Falls

Bill Pr81, An Act respecting the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto Foundation

Bill Pr82, An Act respecting the Ontario Association of Not-For-Profit Credit Counselling Services

Bill Pr83, An Act respecting the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (Ontario) Inc.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** As we gather to continue the business of this House, I would like to bring all members up to date on some important issues.

As the Legislature gets back to work, we are reminded of what the people of Ontario have consistently asked for of their elected officials: that we work to take action on the issues that are important to them. They want to know that the government is following a plan to manage their hard-earned dollars in a way that is efficient, that is responsible and that is accountable. They want to know that the government has a plan that will protect the first-class services that we all rely on: health, education and safe communities.

I want to remind members that we are spending more money on health care than any government in the history of this province. However, what is equally important is that we are targeting those dollars to necessary, leading-edge medical services, not on bricks and mortar.

Ontarians also want to know that their government has a plan to create jobs and opportunity for all Ontarians today and certainly for their children and for their grandchildren tomorrow. We have that plan, and during the next few weeks of this session we will continue to follow that plan as we manage those changes that will benefit all Ontarians.

Jobs, growth and prosperity for our generation and for our young people have always been the top priority of this government, and it was a significant focus at the annual premiers' conference, which I had the pleasure of attending about two weeks ago.

**1350**

Our government approached the conference wanting to see some real progress on two issues especially: job creation and ensuring a better future for all our children. These are the issues we have been addressing in Ontario, and we were pleased about the progress that is being made at the national level. The conference agenda was wide-ranging, but the unifying theme of premiers from east to west was our commitment to work together to strengthen our economy and build hope for the future.

There was agreement on several important topics. For example, it was agreed that a strategy should be created to address the problem of youth unemployment in this country.

Our youth are our future.

In that regard, I would like to table in this House a copy of two reports that were shared with the premiers: A Proposed Framework for the Development of a Comprehensive Youth Employment Strategy, and a second report, the Western Best Practices Report on Youth Employment. I commend these reports to all members of the Legislature.

Ontario has enjoyed three straight months of significant job growth for youth, but there is much more to be done. That is why Ontario fully supports efforts on behalf of our youth.

We also agreed that federal and provincial finance ministers should negotiate the renewal of Canada's existing financial arrangements, including equalization. Premiers of differing political parties and regional interests reached a consensus on the need for practical, down-to-earth changes that will improve the partnerships between governments on the management of vital services that we all rely on. The premiers have decided to meet again this fall in order for us to address ways of consulting Canadians to ensure a strong, surviving federation.

I would like to meet with the two opposition leaders prior to then to bring them up to date on the premiers' conference and to hear their views on consultations with Ontarians in the coming year.

Premier Roy Romanow suggests that 80% of the solution to Canadian unity issues is to improve the federation in practical, non-constitutional ways. The premiers have been doing this for two years now. We need the federal government to join us in this most important undertaking.

All these important agreements will help to ensure more efficient, more effective government. This in turn will help strengthen our federation, improve the economic climate and the conditions of every province, and build lasting jobs and prosperity for all our people.

Most premiers left the conference recognizing that we are making progress on important issues but that there is a great deal of work yet to be done as we make our way towards our common goals.

We in Ontario are well aware of the work that lies ahead.

This session will continue the work we have already begun to get Ontario on the right track again. It will be an opportunity for us to take time to talk with our partners, to listen to the input of Ontarians and to ensure that the changes we are making are fully understood by those who indeed will benefit from them.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** You never listen.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The members for Cochrane South and Sudbury, please come to order.

**Hon Mr Harris:** The Chair of Management Board will be making a statement on the legislative plans for this session in a few moments.

As we continue to manage the changes we are making, we are already seeing some positive signs that suggest Ontario's economy is heading in the right direction. Business confidence is at an all-time record high in this decade. Ontarians have already benefited from the implementation of the first of our income tax rate cuts. Consumer confidence has risen for six straight quarters, and with three more income tax rate cuts yet to come, we expect this trend to continue. Retail sales are up almost

5% this year. New car sales in Ontario were up 16% in May, after a 32% jump in April.

This morning, I visited Canadian Thermos Products in Scarborough, hearing at first hand what increased consumer confidence means to Ontario workers on the factory floor. Manufacturing thermoses and lunchpails is a symbol of getting back to work and back to school in Ontario.

The welfare rolls have declined to their lowest levels in over five years. Minister Ecker will make a statement tomorrow to bring all members up to date on our progress on Ontario's work-for-welfare program, which is already bringing hope to thousands of Ontarians who have been caught in the cycle of welfare dependency.

Most importantly, our province is leading the nation in job creation. We've seen 124,000 net new jobs created just since March, about 56% of all new jobs in Canada. Our unemployment of 8.2% is at its lowest point in seven years. We are seeing new jobs and growth throughout the province. For example, just since the last time we met — it doesn't seem that long ago — Denso Manufacturing has announced that Ontario will be the site of its first Canadian plant, bringing 150 new jobs to Guelph. In Kanata, Newbridge Networks has announced plans that it will add between 800 and 1,000 new high-tech jobs every year for the next four years. In Trenton, Heinz chose eastern Ontario over locations in the United States for its sweet goods centre, which will bring new jobs for 220 people. In North York, software maker Oasis Technology plans to hire another 50 employees in the next year.

Every one of these new jobs is among the thousands that have been created just since this House last met. These new jobs and the spinoff benefits they bring to our communities are signs of an economy that is growing, creating jobs, creating prosperity and creating hope. That will continue to be the focus of this House, as it has been for the past two years. With new jobs, new investments and new opportunities, Ontario is getting back to work. Today, so will this Legislature, as we continue to manage the changes that were set out clearly in our government's plan for Ontario.

Progress is being made, but there's a great deal of work ahead. I hope all members will join together as we take the next steps in bringing jobs and growth and opportunity for all Ontarians.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I rise today to inform the House about the government's plans for this session of the Legislature. As the Premier has said, in this working session the government will continue to work to implement a plan for managing change that is working for the people of Ontario. Much of the legislation we will consider in this session has already been introduced. There will be few surprises, but there is a great deal of work to be done.

We have returned in August to allow additional time for consultation and deliberation. We will use this time to ensure that we get the details right and that we continue our record of making progress and managing change.

Two years ago we made a commitment to the people of Ontario that we would introduce major change to make Ontario a place of prosperity and opportunity once again. We are not talking about the kind of incremental tinkering that had left us spending over $1 million an hour more than we were taking in, saddled us with a deficit of $11 billion a year, or burdened our children with a $100-billion provincial debt. We committed to make change that would secure a future full of jobs, prosperity and hope for Ontarians. We are honouring those commitments, and as the Premier has just described, there are encouraging signs of progress that our plan for our province is working.

For greater detail about the positive signs we are seeing, the government has produced an informative booklet, Making Progress, Managing Change: A Report to Ontario Taxpayers, the details of the progress Ontario has made as we work towards our common goal. I would like to remind every member to encourage their constituents to call Publications Ontario at 1-800-668-9938, or in Toronto 416-326-5300. I would also like to invite all members to read each ministry's business plan for valuable information on the new, efficient, accountable manner in which the government now operates. All plans are available on the government of Ontario's World Wide Web site, under "What's New?"

The government recognizes that making change is never easy. By following a detailed plan for prosperity, we are making progress and managing the change that Ontarians asked us to make. We will continue to follow a step-by-step plan to create jobs and investment, protect first-class core services, end the cycle of welfare dependency and restore faith in opportunity and hope for the future in every, single Ontarian.

That will be the substance of this session of the Legislature.

**1400**

## ONTARIO HYDRO

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Last week the Ontario Hydro board received the independent integrated performance assessment. This was a comprehensive eight-month review of Ontario Hydro's nuclear operations. It was carried out by a team of seven independent nuclear experts specifically brought in to review Hydro's nuclear options. Unlike any previous government-appointed chair, Bill Farlinger has initiated unprecedented steps to ensure a more open, accountable process for Ontario Hydro and the public of Ontario.

While the recent reports of Hydro's mismanagement are not pleasant, we cannot ignore the problem. We welcome the fact that for the first time in recent memory Ontario Hydro's problems are on the table and will be dealt with in an open and transparent manner.

The report was highly critical of Hydro's management, workers and processes with regard to the operation of their nuclear facilities. However, despite the shortcomings, the assessment did state that Hydro's nuclear reactors are being operated safely. The report rates Ontario Hydro's overall nuclear operations as minimally acceptable relative to superior industry standards. This is not acceptable to our government, and immediate management attention is required by Ontario Hydro.

As you are all aware, as a result of this report, Ontario Hydro's president and CEO, Dr Allan Kupcis, recognizing his ultimate responsibility for the operations, has resigned.

Upon receipt of the report, I immediately contacted the Atomic Energy Control Board, the regulatory body responsible for the safety and licensing of operations of nuclear facilities, and asked them to give priority attention for review and expert comment with regard to the nuclear safety of our hydro plants. The president of AECB has responded and assured me that they are undertaking a review of the report. They also indicated that the continued operation of Ontario Hydro nuclear reactors does not constitute an unacceptable risk to health, public safety and the environment.

Notwithstanding this, in light of the concerns and issues raised by the IIPA — that is, the report — this government believes it is essential to have a legislative committee process to review the most effective means of addressing these issues. We are fully in favour of a legislative process where MPPs and the public have a better understanding of the issues raised and their resolution.

I invite my fellow colleagues and critics, particularly those former critics and ministers of energy who are still members of this House and who have expertise with respect to Ontario Hydro, to consult with me on the issues and to help determine the best process to serve the public of Ontario.

I want to use that opportunity to discuss the issues of nuclear safety, Ontario Hydro's nuclear recovery strategy and the management protocols within Ontario Hydro. Again, let me reiterate that our government's top priority is the safety and reliability of Ontario Hydro's nuclear facilities.

**The Speaker:** Responses?

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to respond to the Premier's statement. Premier, my caucus and I are delighted to be back here and to get back to work as well, but from a different perspective from the one you obviously hold.

I took some time this summer to travel a bit of the province and visited a number of ridings and a number of communities, including your own. I want to tell you about some of the things I heard, and they don't in any way reflect the mood you have in this statement.

People told me that they were very concerned about the direction health care is taking in Ontario. They told me they were very concerned about the fact that you are proceeding with a plan to close hospitals. They understand very well that you promised specifically that you wouldn't close any hospitals. They are concerned about the fact that, notwithstanding the hospital closure debate, you are laying off close to 15,000 nurses in Ontario hospitals. They are worried about whether or not they are going to be able to get treatment for their kids, treatment for themselves or treatment for their parents should the need arise.

They are very concerned about education in Ontario. They are concerned by the fact that you have withdrawn some $530 million in funding to date from primary and secondary education. They are concerned by the fact that as we prepare ourselves for a knowledge-based global economy, as we are on the cusp of the 21st century, this is a government that's eliminating junior kindergarten, this is a government that's cut funding by 16% to post-secondary education. We are now the lowest funder per capita in Canada.

Premier, when you tell us that our youth are our future, clearly your actions don't reflect your words. We used to fund $59 million for summer employment programs for our youth. This year it was $37 million. One in five children in Ontario are growing up behind the eight ball, either in poverty, abuse or neglect, and what did you do in those circumstances? You cut funding to children's aid societies by $17 million. That has resulted in the loss of 343 case workers. This at a time when we all know that the incidence of reported abuse in homes has doubled in the last five years.

We understand the pattern that is emerging all too well. In a Mike Harris Ontario, clearly bigger is going to be better: We are going to have fewer, larger school boards, we're going to have fewer, larger classrooms, we're going to have fewer, larger hospitals, we're going to have fewer, larger communities.

Institutions and systems and wealth obviously count for more than people in your Ontario. It's perfectly clear, and the people of Ontario now well understand this. Notwithstanding this statement of yours today that would tell us that all is well in the state of Denmark, it is clear that in your Ontario, you understand the price of everything and the value of nothing.

**1410**

## ONTARIO HYDRO

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to respond on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal Party to the statement made this afternoon by the Minister of Energy.

We welcome the government's intention to strike a legislative examination into the matters of Ontario Hydro that have been in the news recently. My colleagues and I would recommend that we model that inquiry on the basis

of the select committee on Ontario Hydro affairs which this Legislature had in place 15 years ago. We would obviously expect that when that select committee on Hydro affairs is constituted, it will have two or three key areas of responsibility.

First and foremost, the committee and the province are entitled to know, what is the Hydro and energy policy of the Harris government? Two years after the election of this government, the people of Ontario have no idea whatsoever as to what the Hydro and electricity policy and the energy policy of the Harris government is. So first and foremost, the time has come for Mr Sterling and his friend Mr Harris to put before the people their Hydro and energy policy.

Second, clearly the people of Ontario are entitled to some accountability and some answers for the scandalous behaviour that was highlighted last week in the study to which the minister made reference, a study which highlights criticisms that have been made by the federal regulator over the last two or three years. I don't know where Mr Farlinger has been when the AECB has said clearly many of those things in the last two or three years.

The government talks about transparency, openness and accountability. I have one specific suggestion in that connection today. You, Mr Premier, could today table the letter of resignation of Dr Allan Kupcis before this Legislature just to see what the former president has had to say about the circumstances giving rise to his alleged resignation.

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I want to respond first of all to the Premier's statement, because there are a number of remarkable things that the Premier says in his statement.

He says that Ontario is spending more on health care than ever before. Premier, if you examine the estimates, what turns out to be true is that your government is spending more on laying off health care workers and nurses than ever before. That's where the expenditure increase is coming in: the cost of laying off people who work in the health care system. And your government is spending more on the cost of closing hospitals than ever before. That's where the big new expenditures in the health care system are coming under your government.

Don't try to take credit for a better health care system, because it's not a better health care system. There are more people on waiting lists. There are more people who are being told when they go to hospital, "Please bring a family member with you because we don't have the nursing staff any longer to look after you." You have to bring someone to the hospital with you to take care of you. There are more people waiting for home care, more people waiting for other kinds of care outside the hospital system than ever before. So don't try to take credit for an improving system, Premier. It's getting worse out there, far worse, and everybody across Ontario, from community to community, knows it.

You also said something else that has to be examined. You want to somehow try to take credit for youth job creation. I have to tell you, the real youth unemployment numbers out there are worse than ever. That has happened under your government's supervision. In fact, it has happened, 100,000 more youth unemployed, as a direct result of your government, because one of the things your government did, and you've done it consistently over the last two years, was to go about wiping out youth employment programs for the summer. You've gone about it systematically: for example, things like Jobs Ontario Summer Employment, gone; the educational leadership program, gone; the student exchange program, gone; the Ministry of Natural Resources Environmental Youth Corps, cut dramatically; the Summer Experience program, cut dramatically. All of that under your government.

Premier, don't try to take credit for greater youth employment. The fact is, there are more youth unemployed and your government has had a direct role in leading to more youth being unemployed.

Then there's the issue of children, and I want to repeat some of the things that have been said already. Your government is undermining child care. Child care spaces have been wiped out under your government. Early childhood education is clearly not a priority for your government. Clearly, more children are living in poverty.

You like to go about the province crowing about your cuts to social assistance, but, Premier, the reality is that 50% of the recipients of social assistance in this province are children. In fact what you do is you go about the province crowing that you have been able to cut the resources, the income of children. That's what you've done, and the fact that there are more children living in poverty, the fact that there are more children at risk, the fact that there are more children out there who are in very difficult circumstances, is a direct result of the actions of your government. Anybody who takes 30 seconds to look at the issues comes to that conclusion.

I also want to note: Please don't try to take credit for the fact the American economy is doing well. Every economist who comments on the economy says the American economy is doing well; 80% of Ontario's exports go to the US economy and many of them say very directly, "God, we hope the US economy continues to perform well." That's what they're saying.

Premier, as you go about beating up on teachers, as you go about beating up on health care workers, as you go about beating up on municipal workers and trying to shove more and more of the negative impact of your government down on to municipalities, don't try to take credit for the US economy and whatever bubbling over it's had in Ontario. Your government has had some very negative effects on the Ontario economy, and people note that.

Finally, just a word to the Minister of Energy: In the first two years of your government, your administration talked only about the privatization of Hydro. You didn't

spend any time. The Macdonald commission was all about the privatization of Hydro. That's your government's agenda and when you did that you missed —

**The Speaker:** Member of the third party, order.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is for the Premier. You made a very clear and explicit promise in the 1995 election campaign. You said, and I quote directly, "Certainly, I can guarantee you it is not my plan to close hospitals." To date you have closed down 22 hospitals; you've shut thousands of beds and laid off thousands of nurses. Basic nursing care is now at risk in Ontario as a direct result of what you're doing to health care.

The net result is that there are a growing number of patients who are going to find less room in our hospitals; they are going to be discharged sicker and quicker. You can tell us you're spending more money, but nobody believes that your actions have resulted in an improvement in health care in Ontario. In fact, you are frightening Ontarians when it comes to health care.

Premier, it's never too late. Will you now agree to disband your commission, pull the plug on it, honour your promise and not close hospitals in Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the Minister of Health will be able to follow up with a number of details, but before I refer any supplementaries to the Minister of Health, let me ignore the raucous interjections and say welcome back to all of those who can't get on question period but would like to yell anyway.

Let me say very directly that during the debate, when the NDP and the Liberals talked about their plans to close hospitals, we were very clear. We did not have a plan to close hospitals. What we did have for health care was this commitment: that any savings we found in the health care system would be reinvested, and that is exactly what we're doing.

**Mr McGuinty:** Nobody buys that, Premier. Go outside this building and talk to Ontarians. Stay away from the golf courses for a while and talk to Ontarians. They're going to tell you that they're very concerned about what's going on in health care in Ontario today.

Let me give you just one little example of your failure to recognize some of the excellence that is already out there, because it seems to me that when it comes to health care we ought to find it and reward it when it comes to excellence in terms of delivery of health care. I'm talking about Women's College Hospital. You've got some time tomorrow afternoon, Premier; I've checked your schedule. I've made an appointment for myself to tour the facilities and to find out what precisely is at risk here as you proceed with your plan to close it. I have a very simple question for you: Will you accompany me, Premier, tomorrow when we visit, you and I together, the Women's College Hospital so you can gain a better understanding of what's at risk here?

**1420**

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate the question and I appreciate the offer, but I do have other plans for tomorrow. I don't want to interrupt any of your photo ops at Women's College Hospital. So you play politics and we'll continue with our plan to deliver first-class, 21st-century quality health care to Ontarians.

**Mr McGuinty:** If you took advantage of that opportunity, you would never, ever again call the Women's College Hospital "a bunch of dingy old buildings." Surely you recognize that one of the big reasons you're sitting in that chair today is because you made a promise in the last election not to close hospitals. You've broken that promise. You have created this fiction called the hospital restructuring commission that somehow is supposed to relieve you, absolve you of any responsibility when it comes to hospital closures. You should understand that people see through that. That is perfectly transparent. Your fingerprints are going to be all over the closed hospital doors of this province.

Again, it's never too late. Tell the commission to set aside their work; now assume your responsibility and honour your promise. I want you to stand up now, honour that promise and tell us you're not going to proceed with hospital closures.

**Hon Mr Harris:** We have more than honoured our commitment, our promise in the campaign that while others had plans and the NDP acknowledged they had a look and I think the Liberal leader acknowledged she might close hospitals, we said: "That's not our plan. Our plans are that whatever savings we can — "

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We have fully honoured our commitment to reinvest any savings that could be found in the health care systems. In fact, we have more than honoured that commitment.

I would ask the leader of the Liberal Party to explain this quote from September 22, 1996: "I am convinced there is enough money in the health care system. I don't think we're spending it as effectively as we can." Perhaps as we make these new investments, you can tell us what you plan to cut to support all the spending you're calling for us.

### ONTARIO HYDRO

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My next question is for the Premier. Last week we received a very, very disturbing report on the state of affairs at Ontario Hydro. The report was so damning that it forced the closing of seven nuclear generators. That's over one third of the nuclear generation capacity at

Ontario Hydro. We got the news today that you're going to give us a legislative committee, as we have been asking for, but obviously that is not good enough here. You understand, I'm sure, that there is much at stake here. We're talking about billions of dollars; we're talking about our economy, our environment, our competitiveness, our credit rating.

I'm going to give you an opportunity to answer the question raised by my critic a few short moments ago. We need to know now precisely what you're planning to do. How are you and your minister going to deal with that report and what specifically are your plans for the future of Ontario Hydro?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Eight months ago, Mr Farlinger, the chairman of the board of Ontario Hydro, went public with this statement: "There are problems with the management of Ontario's nuclear facilities. They are of an extent that we do not believe there are the expertise and the resources within Hydro to identify them or bring forward a plan to correct them." Eight months ago he sought approval from cabinet and the minister to go to the best in the world, to bring in an outside report, to lay out before us what is the state and what needs to be done to do it.

I just want to say this: This is a historic move by the chairman of Hydro and by the minister responsible. Had that been done 15 years ago, or 12 years ago, or 10 years ago, or eight years ago, or three years ago, we would not be in the mess that we're in today. But it has been done. We have made it —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Premier. Supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** The Premier talks about historic developments. Let me tell you about a real historic development in the province of Ontario. You are now about to allow the startup of fossil-fuel generating capacity which is going to be the equivalent of seven million cars. There are only five million cars on Ontario roads today. You're going to add to that the equivalent of seven million cars. Your minister has already told us that 1,800 Ontarians annually die premature deaths because of poor air quality. Because you have been asleep at the switch, we are now faced with this disastrous consequence. We're going to have the equivalent of seven million new cars adding air pollution to the air we breathe in Ontario.

Premier, will you admit that your cuts to the Ministry of Environment have now put us behind the eight ball? You should have anticipated this. You didn't anticipate it. Tell us now, what are you going to do to protect Ontarians from the fact that we're going to have to breathe the equivalent of an additional seven million automobiles' exhaust in our air in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I'm sure the minister can respond.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** The fact of the matter is that the estimate which the Leader of the Opposition puts forward was the figure which Greenpeace threw out, which is not accurate. Secondly, if in fact the power is replaced by oil-fired generating stations, Ontario Hydro will still live within the regulated limits set by previous governments for emissions.

**Mr McGuinty:** That's not good enough, Minister. You're telling us now that we should somehow take solace in knowing that it's not really going to be the equivalent of seven million cars; it may only be six million or possibly as low as five million. I would think that one of the things this government ought to do would be to cause no harm.

You talk to some parents who have kids who are asthmatic, talk to some children who have elderly parents who have breathing problems, and they're going to want to know what you're going to do. What are you going to do now to ensure that this new pollution, tonnes and tonnes — there are going to be thousands of tonnes of additional pollution added to our air. That is going to cause smog, it's going to contribute to global warming, it's going to contribute to acid rain. They want to know, what are you going to do to protect them? I want you to stand up now and tell us what you're going to do on that front.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Because of the problems which were identified by this particular report that we mentioned earlier, I believe the safety of our nuclear reactors is our primary concern at this time. We are, as we have demonstrated in this government, very concerned about our air quality. We are working with a number of other jurisdictions to ensure that our air quality is improving. We in this government have focused like no other government has done on air quality standards. There have been 20 years of neglect, according to the Provincial Auditor, with regard to air quality standards. We are the first government to set a particulate standard in this province. We lowered the volatility gasoline pressure this summer to improve air quality in Ontario, the first government to do that in this province.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**1430**

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We are taking a number of steps to improve air quality. It is unfortunate that the fallout of this particular incident will put some dent in that —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for St Catharines, you must withdraw. That last comment was completely —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I simply said it was untrue.

**The Speaker:** I know. That's the one you have to withdraw.

**Mr Bradley:** It is untrue, though.

**The Speaker:** You're not going to get a second chance. You must withdraw.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, I'll withdraw it, but —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also for the Premier, and it concerns Ontario Hydro. When there have been problems at Hydro, when there have been

obvious concerns at Hydro, can you tell us why the first thing your government did when you assumed power was not to deal with the issues at Hydro but to appoint the Macdonald commission to do a report on the privatization of Hydro? Can you tell us why you have been so consumed with the question of privatizing Hydro, selling it off, rather than dealing with the real issues at Hydro?

**Hon Mr Harris:** The Macdonald commission had nothing to do with privatizing; it had everything to do with competition and transparency and openness, which is one of the problems we're seeing that has come today, particularly by your government's — I don't know whether "coverup" is too strong a word, but certainly not transparency, throughout your tenure.

The second thing, as I've already indicated, is thank goodness we had a chair of Hydro and we had a minister who were prepared to go to the best in the world to bring exposure and transparency and make public what has been going on at Ontario Hydro. I would say this: This is the beginning of finding professional and proper solutions to the problems at Hydro instead of letting them deteriorate like your government did for five years.

**Mr Hampton:** This is an interesting rewrite of history the Premier is trying. I remember being part of a cabinet that shut down 12 nuclear reactors because we had some concerns about them. I was part of a government that declared a moratorium on future nuclear development, a government that shut down Bruce A because we had concerns about its safety, a government that approved a $600-million maintenance program at Pickering. That's what I was part of, Premier.

The only thing we have seen from your government in the first two years was the Macdonald report on privatization, and your golfing buddy, the chair of Hydro, running around trying to promote the privatization of Hydro.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr Hampton:** I put the question to you again. I was part of a government that recognized there were some problems at Hydro and took some steps to deal with some of those problems. The only thing we've seen from your government over the last two years is your attempt to privatize Hydro. The current chairman has been your primary spokesman, and the Macdonald report was all about —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You, sir, were part of a government that ruined this province, and we're fixing it.

**Mr Hampton:** I was part of a government that, yes, had to deal with what was left over from Brian Mulroney. I was part of a government that had to deal with the massive downloading —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock. Supplementary?

**Mr Hampton:** I was part of a government that had to deal with the immediate impacts of free trade, where Canada lost 600,000 full-time jobs and Ontario lost 400,000 full-time jobs. We dealt with that. We in fact had some of the best investments.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Dufferin-Peel, Minister, come to order please. Thank you.

**Mr Hampton:** During our term on watch, we had the largest reinvestment in the auto industry ever in Ontario's history, and we repositioned a virtual three quarters of the pulp and paper industry. We actually gained back 400,000 full-time jobs.

But, Premier, that's not the issue here. The issue is this: Ontario Hydro is a mess and for the last two years, instead of focusing on the real issues of Ontario Hydro, your government has ignored those issues. You spend all your time commissioning reports and having the chair of Hydro run around North America trying to privatize Hydro.

I go back to my original question. Why has your government been so preoccupied with the privatization of Hydro, selling it off to your corporate friends? Why have you been ignoring the real problems that exist at Hydro until now?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Mr Farlinger actually, as I recall, has been one who was criticized for being slow in dealing with privatization. He did so because the issue for him was not privatization. The issue for him was competition, transparency, expertise, professionalism in running the generation and the distribution of energy in this province. I can tell you that it was because of him, this government, the cabinet and the Minister of Energy that this report was commissioned, independent of Hydro, some eight to nine months ago, and I say thank goodness you guys were not in the government any longer to keep covering up the problem.

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Premier, if you want to start casting about allegations of coverups, I have a question for you. It concerns Ipperwash. You and your senior ministers have said over and over again in this Legislature that your government gave no direction to the OPP to confront the occupiers at Ipperwash Park. I can quote you, May 29, 1996: "There was absolutely no direction, as there ought not to be, from me or any of my staff to the OPP." That's a quote of you.

We now know through handwritten minutes taken at an interministerial committee meeting, obtained through freedom of information, that your senior aide, Deb Hutton, did give clear direction from you to the OPP. Your executive assistant, Deb Hutton, is quoted as saying: "Premier last night — OPP only, maybe MNR, out of the park only — nothing else," and she adds later on in the meeting, "Government must be seen as acting."

Premier, either you didn't know what your senior staff person was doing and saying on your behalf at that meeting or you gave the direction to the OPP via your staff member, despite what you have been claiming in this House for over a year. You have promised that at the right

time, in the right way, the questions will be answered. It's time now to answer the questions around Ipperwash. We want a public inquiry now. What is your answer?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the Attorney General will have some things to say on this matter, but let me confirm to you that the minutes that were released by the interministerial committee confirm exactly, 100%, everything that I have said on this issue. The minutes themselves that you are in receipt of — they have been made public now so I believe I can quote from them — say on page 5:

The Ministry of Natural Resources: "The minister wants to act as quickly as possible to avoid further damage, to curtail any escalation of the situation." This is the day of the unfortunate incident which took place later that evening.

The Ministry of the Attorney General: "The minister agrees that application will be made for an injunction."

The representative for the Solicitor General: "As a matter of protocol, the SGC does not involve itself in the day-to-day operations of the OPP. The OPP will exercise its discretion regarding how to proceed in removing the Stony Pointers from the park."

I tell you we've been open; we've been public. We felt this was an illegal occupation, according to the press release we put out at the time, and we asked the OPP to deal with it —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Premier.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Premier, come to order, please.

**1440**

**Mr Hampton:** Let me recite a bit of the history. Occupations of Ipperwash park were not new; occupations of Ipperwash park have happened by the same native people in the past. They would wait until the park was closed in the fall, and as a means of registering their claim, registering their protest, they would occupy the park after it was closed.

The position of the OPP in the past was always: "Don't escalate the issue. This is a peaceful protest. Don't do anything to raise conflict or raise controversy." That was the position of the OPP, but two months after you became the government, that policy changed.

I say again to the Premier, it's very clear why that policy was changed. It is in the words and in the notes that were taken of the words that Deb Hutton spoke: "Premier last night — OPP only — out of the park, nothing else...must be seen as acting."

Do you realize the impact that direction would have on officials? Do you realize —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Harris:** The Attorney General may have something to add. I've told you everything we know.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The information that has been released simply confirms what we've been saying all along. We indicated there would be no negotiations on substantive issues of concern to the occupiers while an occupation was going on.

Second, we made it very clear, and the notes confirm this, that the issue of the occupation was something that was being dealt with by the OPP, who are responsible for public safety and security. The notes are quite clear that the only step that was taken by the government was taken by me, and that was to obtain a civil injunction.

**Mr Hampton:** I marvel at the Attorney General's attempt to cover the trail for the Premier. Premier, I want to quote for you from a former civil servant, someone who has left the Ontario civil service. He was at that meeting. This is what he said. This was in the Kingston Whig-Standard:

"'The bureaucrats there were really shocked with what Deb Hutton told them, because that is not the way they did things,' said the official." When he says that's not the way they did things, he's talking about the way these meetings were conducted in the past, before your government took over. "'The general impression was that the Premier wanted to have the protesters out of the park as soon as possible. That was very clearly the message. It was an expression of what he wanted. Certainly everything she said she implied was coming directly from him,'" the Premier.

My point is simply that it's very clear what the words are: "want the protesters out of the park immediately. Government must be seen as taking action" —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, the next day one of them died. We want a public inquiry —

**The Speaker:** Come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The commissioner of the OPP was very candid and very clear. He stated in a release that he issued, "I am the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police and I do not take tactical or operational direction from the government." He went on to say: "We keep officials apprised of policing situations in a broad framework. That, however, does not include sharing details of operational plans beforehand."

Quite simply, that comment from the OPP commissioner is borne out in all the documents that have been turned over. There was only one tactical approach that the government took, and that was to obtain a civil injunction.

**The Speaker:** New question, official opposition, member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I have a question to the Premier on the Ipperwash affair to find out who made the key decision. The police, the OPP, had a detailed plan. It was called Project Maple. It said the objective was to "contain and negotiate a peaceful solution." This is their own document. It goes on to point out that they set up three separate negotiating teams, three separate teams so two of them could negotiate: one negotiates 12 hours, the next 12 hours and one relief team. That was the OPP plan to negotiate a peaceful settlement to this.

We then find that the government made a different decision. The government imposed a condition on the OPP. It was noted that there would be no negotiations with the Stony Pointers. You, Premier, and the government made that key decision. The OPP wanted to negotiate, they set up three teams, they were ready to do it 24 hours a day and you said, "There will be no negotiations." Why did you determine there would be no negotiations with the Stony Pointers?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I determined nothing. I gave no direction. I gave no influence on it. We left that entirely to the OPP. I assumed there would be negotiations.

**Mr Phillips:** Now we are at the heart of the matter. The Premier is saying it was his understanding there would be negotiations. The government represented by this interministerial committee with your executive assistant decided on a different course. One of two things has happened. You said, "Proceed with the negotiations," and they disregarded your instructions, or there has been some miscommunication between you and the public on this matter and in fact you were a party to the decision for no negotiations. Can you confirm today that it was your instructions that negotiations should be proceeding as per the OPP plan?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I gave no directions. I gave no directions to the OPP. I left it to the OPP how they were to proceed and the interministerial committee was there. I've been very up front about that. I've been very clear —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — the only direction that the government took in any of this matter was to say what we said publicly at the time, and it's now a matter of public record. We felt there was an illegal occupation. The Ministry of Natural Resources wanted its park back as soon as possible and we left it to the OPP as to how to proceed. The only action we took — and the minutes of the day are very clear — is that we sought a civil injunction. That's the action we took and everything else is a matter of public record.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Premier. As you know by now, the men and women who work in our schools, fire stations, city hall, police officers on the street, in fact all the public sector workers in Ontario are extremely worried about your Bill 136 and the powers that you're going to give to your special handpicked commission. This is of course your way of making sure that ordinary workers and their families pay the price for your $1-billion municipal download.

Last month more than 2,400 workers marched here to Queen's Park for the first-ever special Ontario Federation of Labour emergency convention to try to present you with a proclamation. You weren't here to receive it and neither were any of your representatives, so I have it here for you and I'll present it to you on their behalf.

The workers don't want to strike. They don't want a confrontation. They want an opportunity to meet with you and talk about the alternatives to your dictatorial, draconian, confrontational Bill 136. Will you stand in your place today and say that you're going to avoid that kind of chaos and that you will meet with those workers' representatives?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Of course. So will the Minister of Labour, so will the cabinet and so will I. We've said very publicly we'd like to meet to resolve the issues so we can get from point A to point B as quickly as possible: point A, an $11-billion deficit and bankruptcy; point B, a balanced budget and a thriving, prosperous Ontario with jobs and opportunity for everybody. Whenever anybody wants to meet with me to discuss that, I'm ready.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** We'll recess for five minutes.

*The House recessed from 1450 to 1506.*

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Mr Christopherson:** Premier, what we've seen here today is exactly what's going to happen in community after community after community all across Ontario, and you're responsible. You can say you're going to set up an arm's-length commission, as you've done in many other cases, but the people aren't fooled. You're responsible for every decision made by those commissioners against workers and their collective rights. You're going to cause the chaos that's happening in our communities, and it's directly related to your tax cut and your downloading on to municipalities.

You've said here today that you're prepared to meet with workers and their representatives. What they want you to do is treat them with the same respect and decency and process you gave to doctors. You've said you'd put that offer on the table and you'd meet with workers. Premier, I want you to stand in your place now and honour that commitment. Tell workers that you will meet with them and that you will have your office call the office of Gord Wilson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and put the offer on the table that you gave to doctors. Honour your commitment, Premier. Do it now.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Okay.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. On August 5 the minister announced the Ontario social assistance caseload had declined by 210,000 recipients in two years of reform by this government.

*Applause.*

**Mr Hudak:** Certainly, by the applause on this side of the House, a recognition that this is substantial progress

on behalf of taxpayers, on behalf of recipients across Ontario.

In discussions with those receiving social assistance in Niagara South this summer, what they asked for is an opportunity to work, to get back into the workforce and contribute to the communities in which they live. My question to the minister is, how have the government's reforms to date on social assistance helped those people get back into the workforce?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I'd like to thank my honourable colleague from Niagara South for the question. We have indeed been encouraged by the number of individuals who have been able to leave welfare, to go back into the workforce. That's where most of them want to be and that's the goal of our Ontario Works program, our work-for-welfare program that we are rolling out across the province.

I'm pleased to report that over 35 communities are now involved in workfare. There have been some 36,000 individuals who are participating or have participated in the various components, and we're very pleased with the feedback we've heard from them, both the participants and also the feedback from those administrators and agencies that are involved. We look forward to continuing this progress across the province.

**Mr Hudak:** I know these are very encouraging results on behalf of taxpayers and social assistance recipients, the early success of Ontario Works and, importantly, 210,000 fewer people receiving benefits.

Also, to the minister, a question on behalf of those who are paying the bills — the farmers, teachers, truck drivers and those who pump the gas at gas stations, who have every right to expect that the hard-earned tax dollars they pass on to the government are administered efficiently and truly help those who need assistance: How have the taxpayers and the communities in which they live benefited from two years of progress on welfare reform?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Actually, there have been two benefits. There has been the personal benefit, if you will, of those individuals who no longer have to rely on welfare who are better off and where families are better off because they are back in the workforce. Second, it is of benefit to the taxpayers who are paying for the system, and we have saved $1.3 billion in this province in the last two years. That is a major payback for those taxpayers and we will anticipate future savings as our reforms continue. We have an obligation not only to the people who are on welfare to give them the tools and the encouragement to get off, but we also owe it to the taxpayers who pay for the system to make sure their money is being well used. I think when most of the taxpayers in this province look at the savings they've had in their community, they will think this program is working and they will believe this government is doing what it said it would do.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to talk to you about your culpability. Particularly in the course of this summer, your hand in helping to ruin public services in this province has been well established, particularly the operations of hospitals. We've seen what you want to do to Women's College and Wellesley, Riverside and Montfort, and how you're gutting some of the best services that are provided.

That's not enough, apparently. Your support for Bill 136 and your colleagues' adding police officers and municipal workers and firefighters and those who are teachers in schools to the list is just a reflection of how you want to completely devastate the public service ethic in this province.

Minister, will you agree to change at least your support of taking away not just jobs from teachers, of ruining their working conditions, of making them deal with unbelievable situations in which they're supposed to provide care — now you want to take away their ability to bargain properly with their employers, to take it all away from the support workers who are needed in those hospitals. Isn't firing them enough? Won't you stand down from these unfair labour rules?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The honourable member couldn't be more wrong, and it's unfortunate that he does such fearmongering on such a sensitive issue.

The health care sector is restructuring, and part of the responsibility of all of us is to ensure that happens smoothly, that there are no gaps in services for patients. There is nothing in Bill 136 that takes away any of the existing rights of employees. In fact, it facilitates a faster process, and if the parties on a volunteer basis come to a conclusion in the process at any time, it will be their conclusion and their process, including the right to arbitration.

You're talking about a sector that does not have the right to strike; you're talking about a sector that all parties agree needs to be restructured. A responsible government will provide the legislative basis to make sure that happens, because our goal in all of this restructuring is to put the patients first, to increase the services.

There are no cuts in services in the industry restructuring. There will be more jobs for more nurses. There will be more jobs for more hospital workers in the long run as we meet the needs of a growing and aging population. Bill 136 and the new labour laws help us do that.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'm certain that not a nurse in this province has been given an ounce of comfort by this minister's total lack of recognition of what they're going through and how Bill 136 is only adding to the anxiety they feel for themselves and for their patients.

The bad news for you and for your colleagues is that people in the coffee shops of this province are starting to get it. They understand that you don't care one whit about making sure that nurses have a good working environ-

ment. It doesn't bother you that you're laying off thousands of other workers, that people are left alone in their rooms, that this past weekend in Northwestern Hospital a five-year-old was stuffed in a geriatric ward with all kinds of infections after he had a tonsillectomy because you cut the money.

Minister, in this legislation it says, "...taking due account of how much money hospitals have." They don't have the money because you won't give it to them. Now you want it both ways.

Will you at least show some decency, stand down from your support of Bill 136 and tell at least the hospital unions you've put under so much pressure they'll be able to negotiate in good faith and not see this added to the list of woes you've generated?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Let's see what nurses have actually said about hospital restructuring. On November 20, 1996, Jane Cornelius, the former president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, said, "The health care restructuring commission is creating a system that will get rid of the waste, get rid of the duplication and will actually preserve jobs." She said about Dr Duncan Sinclair, the chair of the commission, that he is an ally for nurses and that there's a lot of commonality of thinking about how hospitals should be run. The nurses themselves only last January took out ads in the major daily newspapers in Toronto, saying, "There's 30% waste and duplication and too much administration in the hospital system."

But I'd like to ask the honourable member, if we look at the Ottawa area, something extremely important to his leader, for example: What are you opposed to in restructuring there, when at the end of the day there'll be more services; at the end of the day there'll be six more operating rooms, 15 new intensive care unit beds, two new MRIs, 2,600 new long-term-care spaces including 1,016 new nursing home beds, 44 more rehabilitation beds and 143 new —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Energy. There's a report in today's Hamilton Spectator by Sharon Boase that says: "While helping battle the five-day blaze last month" — referring to the Plastimet fire — "George Cooke fell face first into a 'toxic lake' of chemicals and heavy metals. He was headed for a well-deserved cup of coffee but ended up swallowing a mouthful of toxic swill that also got into his eyes, nose and ears."

Minister, you will know that on July 22 I held a news conference to call on you and this government to hold a public inquest. The firefighters association that represents firefighter Cooke was a part of that news conference, as was Greenpeace, CUPE, OPSEU and resident representatives Charlotte Fournier and Ann Gallagher. Your own Premier said on that day: "I think they" — residents — "should be getting answers to more questions and we want answers too.... I can assure the public that our concern is the same."

Will you offer the citizens of my community the public inquest that they need and deserve?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I believe the Solicitor General would be the proper minister to report to you. I will take that on notice for the minister and have him get back to you.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I ask the minister if he'd like to refer it now to the Solicitor General.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I refer the question with regard to the Plastimet fire and whether or not an inquiry should be held —

**The Speaker:** You can either answer it or refer it.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I apologize. I was in another conversation in the chamber and didn't hear the question, as it wasn't directed to me. I gather it had something to do with a public inquest or inquiry; I'm not sure which term the member used. But certainly an inquest would not be appropriate, as he appreciates as a former officeholder in the capacity I now serve in.

With respect to an inquiry, I'm not sure what he's driving at. We should have, any day now, a full report from the fire marshal's office with respect to the circumstances surrounding the fire. We'll have a better opportunity to gauge the need for further investigation following receipt of that report, which hopefully we will have this week.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** My supplementary is directed to the Minister of Environment and Energy. I want somebody from this government today to take responsibility for something. Let's not quibble with words here. What the member for Hamilton Centre is asking for is a public inquiry into what happened there. The MOEE budget has been cut by 35% and you have laid off more than 750 staff. These cuts seriously hampered the time it took to respond to the Plastimet fire.

**1520**

We need a public inquiry to look into the effects of your cuts on the lack of coordinated response to the fire, to the long-term health effects of the release of toxic chemicals that entered the groundwater in Hamilton, that polluted the air throughout Hamilton, and we need to know that it won't happen again. Your cuts and your downsizing are having an effect on the environment in this province.

Minister, I ask you, will you hold a public inquiry so we can make sure that this is corrected and won't happen again?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I indicated earlier that we were expecting a report this week from the Ontario fire marshal and I think we'll gauge further reactions on the part of this government when we receive that report.

## MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I rise to respond to a question put by the leader of the third party on July 3. The member made allegations about the Ministry of Transportation and a private contractor.

First, I would like to address the short-term business plan for the Kingston-area ferries. This was not a new MTO contract, as the member had alleged, but extra work added to a pre-existing contract with local municipalities which, by the way, those municipalities had awarded through a competitive process.

With respect to the tenders for area maintenance in Sault Ste Marie, the reason no award was made was because all the bids were higher than the present MTO costs, and this is consistent with our commitment to outsource maintenance only where savings can be achieved for Ontario taxpayers. I think that the member would not want us to spend taxpayers' dollars that weren't necessary.

This non-award was announced in a non-ministry press release four months ago. The bidders were also advised by phone and in writing at that time.

The other issues raised by the member on July 3 had been —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much. Supplementary, leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** The question around the contract in the Algoma-Manitoulin area was raised by one of the contractors who understood at the time that they were the low bidders. They asked the same question of you that they asked of me. IMOS was one of the bidders. IMOS did not get the contract. They were told the next day that no tender was going to be awarded. The same issue arose in Timmins, where MTO employees were given a memorandum stating, "If you want a job, get in touch with IMOS."

The question is this, and it's a very simple question: In Algoma-Manitoulin, IMOS does not register the low bid, so no contract is granted; in Timmins, MTO employees get a memorandum saying, "Talk to IMOS." Why is it that across this province, when it comes to privatization contracts from your ministry, always IMOS —

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Again I want to say that the reason the contracts were not awarded was because the costs these contractors wanted to do the maintenance for were going to be greater than what MTO costs have been over a period of time.

I believe we have a commitment to the people of Ontario only to do certain things that are in their best interests in making sure that we put our dollars to good use. If a private sector contractor cannot deliver services in a cost-efficient way, obviously we are not going to privatize those services.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Environment. I ask you not to pass the question, to deal specifically with your ministry's response in handing the Plastimet fire in Hamilton, from your perspective as Minister of Environment.

What we have seen since that night, and continually, has been nothing but total incompetence and mishandling of the situation by your ministry as a result of the cuts — not because the people on the front line are not good or competent; it's because you have taken away their tools and their ability to respond to fires such as at Plastimet. Plastimet is only the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of such situations that are ready to explode across Ontario, and your ministry cannot respond.

It took 12 hours for your high-tech equipment to get to the site. It took 12 hours before we could properly monitor what was going on. There was a screwup right from the first moment, and you have to wear that and you can't run away from it, Minister.

Let me quote what you said in the Hamilton Spectator: "I am very concerned for the people of Hamilton. I have no fear of a public inquiry as to what my ministry did or did not do." Will you stick by those words and call a public inquiry today?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I indicated before that the realm of any kind of inquiry into the emergency situation which resulted at the Plastimet fire would fall under the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General, so therefore I refer the question to the Solicitor General.

**Mr Agostino:** I find it amazing that this minister cannot stand there and answer to the people of Hamilton why your ministry totally screwed up and put people's lives at risk. Firefighters today are fearing for their health, and police officers and residents, because of your incompetence and your ministry's incompetence.

Let me tell you what you had to say on July 17. This is your responsible comment: "'I am not sure it's an environmental problem,' Norm Sterling says. 'I don't feel it's an urgent issue.'" That was your response to the problem in Hamilton. Will you stand up, will you be accountable, will you do the honourable thing and reassure the people of Hamilton and of Ontario that this cannot happen again? Will you stand up today and urge your colleague to call a public inquiry?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Ask me a question about the fire, ask me about the response of my ministry, and I'll be pleased to answer, but with regard to an inquiry, that's in the realm of the Solicitor General, so I refer the question to the Solicitor General.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. On page 5 of the Common Sense Revolution, your party said, "We will work closely with municipalities to ensure that any actions

we take will not result in increases to local property taxes."

our government's download on to Ontario municipalities is anything but a wash. In fact, it has huge impacts in northern Ontario and northern Ontario households. I want to give you some examples of that per household for northerners. These numbers include what you are downloading with the exception of provincial highways, plus the elimination of the unconditional grants, because you well know they make up a significant portion of northern municipal budgets. In Algoma, the increase per household, $982; Cochrane district, the increase per household, $1,004; Kenora district, an increase of $1,185; Nipissing, an increase of $949 per household; Rainy River, $1,123, and the list goes on.

How can you justify these huge property tax increases for the people of northern Ontario?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'd like to refer that question to the minister of northern affairs.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I appreciate the question from the member of the third party. As she's well aware, or maybe she isn't, I'd like to remind her that it's a little premature to make those kinds of calculations right now. What we have is the first step in a process where we've given some numbers to municipal leaders so they can plan better to find efficiencies and restructure, and also give input on how to deliver service in the future given the fact that we're uploading half of the cost of residential education across the province.

She's also well aware of the next step. Now that we've seen some of the preliminary numbers on the fiscal trade, we want to make sure that the north is treated fairly. We recognize it costs more to do business in northern Ontario because of the climate, the sparse population spread over a large geographic area and a number of other factors that have been well documented by this government. We've treated them fairly in the past. We have this community reinvestment fund along with transition dollars to make sure at the end of the day all municipalities and all householders in the province are treated fairly.

**Ms Martel:** There's nothing premature about these numbers. These figures come from the download announced by your colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs several weeks ago, including the unconditional grants which your government consistently refuses to admit have a huge impact on northern municipalities. Your northern grant of $70 million doesn't even come close to the total download in northern Ontario, which is estimated to be some $282.9 million every year. Your fund has no criteria. No one knows how to qualify. But everyone in northern Ontario certainly knows that $70 million is not going to deal with the shortfall they're going to experience under your government's download.

You're the Minister of Northern Development. When are you going to start standing up and defending northern municipalities and northerners from these huge property tax increases?

**1530**

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I am not sure where the member of the third party gets her exact figures, but I can tell you that the community reinvestment fund has $570 million. I can also tell you, as the Minister of Northern Development, that I've been working for a year with FONOM and NOMA and the mayors of northern Ontario. One of the recommendations they told us was that they want to see the reinstatement of the northern support grant which was cancelled in 1990, that your government did nothing about.

But they didn't want to call it a grant. They wanted grants in this province to be community reinvestment funds based on need, and this is just another step that we'll work on the details of this fall. I'm meeting with FONOM and NOMA and mayors next week at AMO, and that will be another step in the consultation. We want to take our time to get it right.

## DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On August 5, I was both shocked and disturbed to learn that the Ontario Divisional Court had declared one of the province's tough new anti-drunk-driving laws unconstitutional. The administrative driver's licence suspension, a law which allows police officers to get an immediate 90-day licence suspension from the registrar of motor vehicles, and which incidentally was supported by all three parties in this House, is specifically designed to save lives by getting drunk drivers off our roads. This law is clearly in the public interest. Holding a driver's licence is a privilege, not a right. Anyone who abuses that privilege and endangers the lives of others deserves to be dealt with swiftly and harshly.

I realize the minister cannot comment on the case while it is still before the courts. However, I would ask the minister to stand today and assure the people of Ontario that this ruling will not deter him from continuing to lead the way in the fight to eliminate drinking and driving.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I would like to thank the member for her question and acknowledge once again her efforts in the fight against drinking and driving, which began long before many of us were in this chamber.

Unfortunately, alcohol is still one of the most common factors leading to fatal collisions in Ontario. In 1995, 317 people were killed in drinking-driver crashes, one third of all road fatalities. As the member knows, it is with her help and the help of all members in this chamber that this province is leading the way in implementing tough drunk-driving legislation.

In addition to the ADLS program, to which we are still very much committed and we will continue to make sure, we have also doubled RIDE funding to municipal police forces and passed Bill 138, which will increase mandatory

licence suspension periods for convicted repeat offenders: three years for second-time offenders and at least 10 years for third-time offenders. All these measures are consistent with the widely held view that driving is a privilege, not a right.

**Mrs Marland:** I am very glad to hear we are not going to waver in our fight to keep drunk drivers off our roads. Drunk drivers are involved in over 60% of fatal automobile accidents.

I am very interested about Ontario's experience up to now with the administrative driver's licence suspension. We'd like to know if this new law has had tangible results, and do we need to take more punitive steps in this continuing battle to save lives? Can the minister offer the House any tangible results of this program? Is the number of drunk drivers being reduced compared to accident statistics of past years? Are lives being saved through the administrative driver's licence suspension?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** To date, almost 15,000 administrative driver's licence suspensions have been issued. Although the program has been in effect less than a year, there was an 11% decrease in the number of charges for blood alcohol over .08%. There was a 20% decrease in the number of drinking drivers involved in collisions in December 1996 compared to the previous eight years. There was a 25% decrease in the number of drinking drivers involved in personal injury collisions in the month of December, compared to the previous eight years, in 1996. There was also a 40% decrease in the number of drinking drivers in fatal collisions in December 1996 as compared to the previous eight years.

In the province of Manitoba, when they introduced ADLS, it was conclusive that drinking driver fatalities decreased by 27% over the previous five years, and also that impaired driving charges decreased by 32% compared to the previous five years. So we will continue to fight.

## NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Under section 34(a) of the standing orders, I'd like to request a late show for my question to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** File the appropriate papers.

# MOTIONS

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(h), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 89, 91, 92, 93 and 94; that Mr Turnbull and Mr McLean exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business; that Mr Danford replace Mr Carroll in the order of precedence for private members' public business; and that the House will commence at 11 am on Thursday, August 21, to discuss ballot item 89 only.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

# PETITIONS

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It's my privilege to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women and only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, woman-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

It is with pleasure that I add my name to this petition to protect that important institution from this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Could I ask members to please take your conversations outside.

## PAY EQUITY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris government has introduced Bill 136; and

"Whereas Bill 136 strips entitlements to employee status and therefore pay equity rights for home child care providers; and

"Whereas home child care providers are predominantly female; and

"Whereas home child care providers are one of the lowest-paid groups of workers in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to withdraw Bill 136 and its implications for the Pay Equity Act."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

## COURT RULING

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by approximately 371 residents of the London area to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

**1540**

## KIDNEY DIALYSIS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is no dialysis treatment currently available in the Cornwall area; and

"Whereas this lack of local medical treatment forces dialysis patients throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and beyond to drive to Ottawa or Kingston, sometimes several times a week, even during dangerous winter driving conditions, to receive this basic medical attention, incurring unnecessary stress, cost and inconvenience; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health promised on April 24, 1996, to rectify this medical shortfall by establishing a dialysis treatment facility in Cornwall; and

"Whereas this promise made by the Minister of Health has to date not been kept, resulting in local patients and their family and friends continuing to drive to Ottawa or Kingston for treatment several times per week during the above-noted conditions;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the health minister follows through on the commitment made last April to set up this long-awaited and much-needed health service for Cornwall area residents."

That has been signed by 186 residents of Cornwall and SD&G.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women's-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health," Women's College Hospital.

This petition has been signed by 139 people and I am proud, on behalf of my caucus, to add my name.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by 401 Friends of Women's College Hospital in my riding.

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women; and

"Only about 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to teaching, research and care dedicated to women; and

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as its first collaborating centre for women's health in both North and South America;

"Without a self-governing Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that is not duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the comprehensive model of health pioneered by Women's College Hospital through ensuring self-governance of the one hospital in Ontario dedicated to women's health."

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** There's a great deal of concern about Bill 109, the province's Local Control of Public Libraries Act, which is about to go through third reading. A number of people are very concerned. I have received a petition here from Nancy Fleming, the executive director of the Book and Periodical Council, who sent in a petition with hundreds of names. The petition reads:

"Given that the Ontario provincial government has withdrawn any direct financial support to the libraries of Ontario; and

"Given that community and citizen involvement in the defence of library collections will be weakened by recent legislation, Bill 109; and

"Given that municipal and education funders are also experiencing severe reductions in government support causing massive alteration of services; and

"Given the concomitant threat to the publishing and cultural industries of this province;

"Let it be known that we insist the government of Ontario seriously reconsider its role in supporting and financing the libraries, the publishers and the cultural producers in Ontario."

I am very pleased to sign my name to this petition.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** "Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

I sign my name to this petition as well.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I again rise, this time with just under 1,000 names, and the petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the legislative authority to restrict going topless in public places; and

"Whereas sections 173 and 174 of the Criminal Code relating to public nudity be clarified to provide better protection of community standards;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to clarify legislation on going topless in public places."

I endorse this petition with my signature.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in full agreement with its contents.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

"Over half the people in Ontario are women; and

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health; and

"Women have special medical needs, since their bodies are not the same as men's; and

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs; and

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America; and

"Without Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's needs and health."

This has been signed by 96 people. Our NDP caucus believes Women's College should be kept open. I have signed my name as well because I agree with the petitioners.

## CASINO GAMBLING

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition signed by 21 people from my riding. In accordance with the standing orders, I'll summarize the contents of the petition. The petitioners declare their opposition to the expansion of casinos and the installation of electronic gambling devices and call for a binding referendum to determine the will of the people regarding the expansion of casinos. I'd like to file that today.

**1550**

## TVONTARIO

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** Speaker, as you know, a privatization process has begun for TVOntario and there is a petition, that this process has now started with some concerns about public consultation. It reads as follows:

"Whereas TVOntario/TFO is owned by the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has bucked public sentiment for maintaining TVO as a publicly owned and funded educational broadcaster by putting TVO through a privatization review; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has not indicated that full public participation will be part of this privatization review;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to hold open and honest public consultation with the people of Ontario before making a decision on the future of TVO/TFO."

I'm glad to sign my name to the petition.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions forwarded to me by Cathy Walker, the national health and safety director of CAW Canada, on behalf of Buzz Hargrove and thousands of auto workers. The petition reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workers' health and safety must be protected in the province of Ontario, especially the right to refuse work which is likely to endanger a worker, the right to know about workplace hazards and the right to participate in joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations help protect workers' health and safety and workers' rights in this area; and

"Whereas the government's discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act threatens workers' health and safety by proposing to deregulate the existing act and regulations to reduce or eliminate workers' health and safety rights and to reduce enforcement of health and safety laws by the Ministry of Labour; and

"Whereas workers must have a full opportunity to be heard about this proposed drastic erosion in their present protections from injuries and occupational diseases;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the present provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. Further, we, the undersigned, demand that public hearings on the discussion paper be held in at least 20 communities throughout Ontario."

I again add my name to theirs. Also, hopefully those hearings will be a lot longer than the shame of the WCB hearings.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I have a petition signed by a number of people from the Peterborough riding. It reads:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the protection of the Rent Control Act; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to allow landlords to charge a tenant who moves into an apartment whatever the landlord can get away with; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to raise the limit of how high rents can increase for all tenants; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the rent freeze which has been successful in forcing some landlords to repair their buildings;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent laws which provide true protection for tenants."

# REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I beg leave to present a report on the June 25, 1997, report of the Integrity Commissioner from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Tascona:** No, Madam Speaker.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS' DAY ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LE JOUR DES LOYALISTES DE L'EMPIRE-UNI

Mr Danford moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act proclaiming United Empire Loyalists' Day / Projet de loi 150, Loi proclamant le jour des Loyalistes de l'Empire-Uni.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Do you have a brief explanatory comment?

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** I will be very brief today. This basically is a bill that will recognize the significant role that I feel the United Empire Loyalists played in the formation of the province of Ontario. We'll debate it later, and I'll be glad to address it then.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SUPPLY ACT, 1997

### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 1997

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997 / Projet de loi 143, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 1997.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** Bill 143 provides for the necessary legal approval of estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997, and for expenditures made during that fiscal year. The government passed interim supply motions to pay salaries and other costs of the government to provide public services to Ontarians. Bill 143 gives effect to those interim motions.

Supply bills are a routine part of the spending process. The expenditures approved in Bill 143 reflect this government's putting into action its commitment to spend less money and reduce the size of government. We know we are spending taxpayer money, not our money, and we are accountable for every dollar the government spends.

This government is committed to the principle of accountability to the taxpayer in everything it does. This is a break from the past which saw the provincial government grow even larger, more costly and more out of touch with the people it serves. We are demanding that government do business like any other business, in other words, in an efficient and productive manner that focuses on results and puts customers first. We are committed to maintaining the quality of our programs by looking at delivering them in a different, more efficient way. We are protecting priority services within a more affordable and innovative government.

To meet this challenge, we are continuing to explore the most cost-effective means for government to do this job. We understand that taxpayers work hard for their money and we will continue to work hard to ensure that their tax dollars are wisely spent. We believe that government must be accountable to taxpayers. That is why we introduced the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, cut red tape, ended the gold-plated pension plan for MPPs, and that is why we will be introducing the Public Sector Accountability Act, so that taxpayers can see how their tax dollars are being used.

The government's plan is working. Our cautious and prudent approach means that we are on a track for a balanced budget for 2000-2001. Ontario's economy is responding with jobs and growth and renewed optimism and confidence. These goals are playing a key role in returning prosperity to Ontario and making this province the best place in the world to live, to work and to invest.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Questions and comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This is an exercise which may be modified by the rule changes the member's government is bringing in to restrict the opportunity for members of the Legislature to debate the important issues of the day, and it's most unfortunate that she should know that under the rule changes this debate, and any future time, regardless of the issues that might be before the House, will be confined to one sessional day as opposed to any other period of time. There are from time to time instances where that should be extended, some instances where it might be abbreviated.

Not this particular bill, but the most important bill or motion coming before this House is the motion to change the rules of this House, because it will mean that now there will be much less debate on important issues of the day, including interim supply. The government will now essentially be run not only symbolically speaking but in fact by a few advisers to the Premier and senior cabinet ministers and this House will become completely irrelevant.

**1600**

What you saw today in the gallery, unfortunate as governments believe this to be, will become the norm rather than the exception as people believe they don't have the opportunity to express themselves in this House in any meaningful way, indeed in any significant length of time. That means people are going to be looking more outside of the Legislature to make their points or engage in extraordinary procedural or disruptive activities to make their views known.

The member should know that is exactly what is going to happen. I hope she will inform the Premier and his advisers of the inadvisability of proceeding with the drastic rule changes that are being contemplated by the government.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** The parliamentary assistant yet again has demonstrated the sort of

revision of history this government always tends to indicate when they talk about anything. The parliamentary assistant, during her comments on concurrence in supply, talked about how her government was the first somehow to have taken into account how government spends money.

I want the member across the way to know that every government in Ontario, in every province across this country and the federal government, has always been concerned about how it spends taxpayers' dollars. The Mike Harris government is not the first government of Ontario all of a sudden to care about where public dollars are spent. Everybody who serves in this Legislature understands we are here primarily to do a couple of things, but one of them is that we oversee, especially you as the government, the finances of Ontario, and you do so at the behest of the taxpayers and on their behalf.

To somehow stand here in your place and in your speech talk about being the first government to come to this conclusion, that really galls me and I think it galls a lot of people in this House. It's very much of a pattern that this government tends to do. Every time this government gets up and talks about anything, they talk about how all of a sudden they're the first government to ever have done anything; nobody has ever done anything in the past; the last 10 years were the lost 10 years where everything was terrible and awful; nothing good happened in Ontario. What hogwash.

People are very understanding of what happened in Ontario over the last 130 years and they understand that every successive government that has governed — and I use the word "governed" — in this province has done so on behalf of the people of Ontario and has done a very good job. This province has been a prosperous one because of the efforts of all the governments of Ontario. For this government to somehow say differently I think is a great disrespect.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure to rise today and participate in some small way on Bill 143. The member for St Andrew-St Patrick, who is the PA to the Minister of Finance, as we all know in this House has done an exemplary job of communicating the message, and the message is very much like the previous member said, "the lost 10 years." In fact, if you look at the fiscal situation we inherited, our commitment to balance the budget is where we were elected and I believe why we were elected. This particular Bill 143 is just one more step.

But I think the commitment to fiscal responsibility, as well as maintaining service in Ontario, is important, but the most important thing is that we started with ourselves. We reviewed the MPPs' compensation. I give all members of this House full credit, but there were some who wanted to hang on to those old traditions. We eliminated the MPP pension and all members shared in that fiscal responsibility.

We're working with our municipal partners and all of our partners in the public sector: hospitals, colleges, universities and the schools. In fact, if you look at the record of this government, we look at what programs we can afford and what programs we can sustain in the future. I ask the people listening to the discussion on Bill 143 here today to recognize the importance of having sustainable funding for our colleges and universities, our schools, our hospitals and our safe communities. We're all sharing in a province that's trying to stop spending $11 billion more per year than it takes in as revenue. We had two choices: We could either increase taxes or cut services, or reduce or modify services, eliminate waste and duplication. So I commend the member for St Andrews-St Patrick and I anxiously await her response to the rebuttals from all three sides.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Of course, if you had just done what you said you were going to do, it may have been one thing, but by giving people a tax cut when we're still running an annual deficit on a year-to-year basis makes absolutely no sense at all.

The other thing you've got to remember is that in this interim supply are the municipal support grants, and I think the people out there should know that as of this year there are no more municipal support grants. It's all right for the Premier to say, as he did after he had the meeting with the mayors here in the city of Toronto last week, and I quote him, according to the paper anyway, that "Nothing in these trades should impact on property tax rates positively or negatively." Let me tell you, the municipalities in this province think totally differently about that.

As a result of a meeting we had in Kingston this past Friday which was attended by 15 wardens and 15 CAOs of the 15 counties making up eastern Ontario, each and every one of these wardens and CAOs stated that real estate taxes in their particular municipality were going to rise by somewhere between 20% and 56% as a result of the downloading that this province is doing upon the municipalities. Those are the facts. This is not the propaganda of one party or another party. These are the figures that have actually been determined in each one of the counties as to what it will cost local taxpayers as a result of property tax increases, as a result of the downloading and as a result of the municipal support grants which have traditionally been available throughout Ontario to municipalities no longer being available to them.

Let me just quote to you from the minutes of the meeting that took place last Friday. It states, "Counties anticipate tax increases will average 20% to 30% and vary between 20% and 50% as a result of the Who Does What initiatives." That's the result of this government's action.

**Ms Bassett:** I'd like to thank my colleagues for their comments, certainly the member for St Catharines and the member for Cochrane South, who pointed out that he is — and I stand corrected; I am delighted to hear that he is concerned about every penny we spend. As you know, when we inherited a deficit of $11.2 billion as the newcomer coming into government, we focused on how we spend every single penny. That is exactly what the

Supply Act — it's a routine part of the spending process. The government passed the interim supply motions to pay the salaries and other costs of government to provide public services to Ontarians. Bill 143 certainly gives effect to these interim motions. As the member for Durham East pointed out, we as a government are committed to spending wisely, and I was delighted to see opposition members reiterating that thought.

I encourage my colleagues to ensure the timely passage of this bill so we can move on to other business of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on the money bill. I suspect the public's aware of what we're debating here, and that is authorizing the government of Ontario to pay its bills. It's quite in order for a bill like this to be before the House.

It does give us an opportunity, though, as the previous members have done, to provide our comments on the direction of the government. The previous speaker, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, talked about running the government as a business. I used to be a businessperson. I had three companies, 300 employees, and I always say one of my claims to fame is I once looked at the first 25 people who left my company and I think 19 of them are presidents of companies right now, major companies in Canada or around the world. So I understand a little bit about running a business.

I just say to the government that no businessperson would run a major business the way this government's running the province of Ontario. There is no question that the government is close to getting things out of control. I have never seen an organization that tried to do so much on such a broad front all at once. It's starting to come unravelled, and you'll be held accountable for it unravelling.

**1610**

I'll just go through the things that, in my opinion, are unravelling: the dumping, the downloading. The public is probably aware that we use this term a lot: "dumping" or "downloading." They've probably heard the Who Does What committee. The fact is that the province has essentially decided to load on to property taxes some of the essential social services that used to be handled by the province. What that means is that rather than funding it out of the general revenues of the province — things like sales tax and corporate tax and gas taxes and income taxes — it's going to be put on property taxes.

That's a mistake. All of our social housing — and by the way, over half of our social housing is seniors' housing. To all the seniors watching this, it used to be that your seniors' housing was funded, quite properly, in our opinion, by the province as a whole. It didn't matter where you happened to be living in the province and whether that community was able to support a seniors' service, because it was handled by the province. It recognized that perhaps the fact that you lived in an area that didn't have a lot of property tax resources shouldn't dictate your level of service. But no, that's all 100% going on to property tax now. Heavy amounts of our child care and our social services are going on to property tax. All of the ambulance services and public health: going on to property taxes.

Furthermore — and I guarantee this — the government, Mike Harris, has said they are going to load $660 million of new costs on to property taxes. I challenge anyone to dispute those figures; I will debate any member of the government at any time on these numbers. Here is why you're adding $660 million. By the way, that's a 4% or 5% increase in property taxes, so if I were in the back bench of the Conservative caucus I would be pounding the table at your next caucus meeting, saying, "You are going to get us into problems that we will not be able to overcome at the next election." Why $660 million in new costs? Because quietly, behind the scenes, Premier Harris took away the $660-million grant that used to go to municipalities. It's gone starting January 1, 1998.

That's my first point when I talk about a government out of control: the downloading, the dumping on to municipalities of social services that even its own Who Does What committee — Premier Harris handpicked 14 people to look at this, led by Mr David Crombie, a name that would be recognizable to many people in Ontario. They said: "Don't do this. It is a mistake." They begged the government not to proceed with this, but you're going ahead with it. That's the first major mistake I wanted to comment on.

The second thing that's going to happen at the same time — I don't know whether the Conservative caucus has been privately briefed on what's going to happen with property taxes, but I guarantee you that come March or April, about eight months from now, there is going to be a reaction in the province that none of us has seen before on property taxes. Why is that? It's for these reasons: We are going through the most sweeping property tax changes in the history of the province. And yes, everybody, the NDP caucus, our caucus, your caucus, all agreed to the need for change. But here's what's happening.

By the way, Mr Speaker, did I get approval — I should have said earlier. Did I get unanimous consent to share my time with the members for St Catharines and Windsor-Sandwich? Should I move that? Unanimous consent? I do appreciate that. My apologies to the House for not seeking that earlier.

To the members of the Legislature, on the property tax issue, when the business occupancy tax is removed and put back on to the commercial realty taxes, when this sweeping change goes across the province — by the way, all of us are going to be asked to approve Bill 149, I gather quite quickly. I don't know whether the Conservative caucus has had a thorough briefing on it, but it has some profound impact and implications for property tax in the province. It's phase two of the property tax bill. We've already passed the first bill, Bill 106. Bill 149 is phase two.

It has a profound impact. It will allow municipalities to set three classes of commercial taxes, but most of that will

be done through regulation. It changes assessment on hydro rights of way and utility rights of way and changes the way they're assessed. It used to be municipally assessed; it's now going to be province-wide assessed. It allows the provincial government to siphon off the federal in-lieu-of-payment payments which currently, for the Ottawa area, for the Kingston area, for other areas, is a huge part of their revenue. Now the provincial government is going to be able to siphon it off.

By the way, this bill also presupposes the passage of another bill dealing with education matters. Separate school supporters will no longer have to be named in apartments. The reason I raise that is because we now have the second huge change that will occur in the province over the next 12 months.

The third huge area of change — and this is where I'm responding to the parliamentary assistant's comments that they like to run the government like a business. You would never run a business like this. The third big change is that you essentially have decided to pick a fight with organized labour. It cannot be anything other than that. I gather that there's a companion bill coming forward dealing with the educational sector.

Our labour movement cannot ignore Bill 136. They cannot permit themselves to stand idly by and let that bill pass. It is a direct challenge to the labour movement. It really does remove collective bargaining in all our public sectors for the next four to five years. The employer can simply refer a labour matter to a tribunal, and the government establishes the tribunal. I said somewhere else that either deliberately or inadvertently — or maybe Premier Harris perceives he's got to have this fight with organized labour. No company would ever choose to attack its union as frontally as this bill does, Bill 136.

The fourth big change that's going to occur is in the education area. I used to be a school trustee. I was chairman of the Metro school board and chairman of the Scarborough school board. I know a little bit about education. We are seeing absolutely fundamental change in the education system over the next 12 to 18 months. The province really now will run the provincial education system board by board by board. The province will set the budget. The province will tell each school board exactly how much money to spend. Inevitably, when you've got one operation paying the bills, that operation will control it. It's just the way it works. And we'll be into province-wide bargaining with teachers.

**1620**

I realize that some in the public watching this probably say, "It's about time. Thank goodness they're taking over. The school boards have not done a particularly good job." But I would just say that many school boards have done a terrific job. Many communities value the fact that they are able to have a sense of involvement in their local school system. That is gone. Once we move to the big amalgamated school boards and the province setting the budgets, it's gone. As I say, I have severe reservations. I think many of our communities across Ontario have been very proud of the job that has been done by local school boards and the relationship between themselves and their local school boards. But that's gone.

I might add that part of the property tax issue now — for the first time in the history of the province, the province is going to set one third of the property tax mill rate. It used to be set by locally elected councils and locally elected school boards. Now a third of the property tax will be set by the province. I'm quite amazed there has not been a stronger reaction to this, that the province has moved in and has said, "We want one third of all property tax money now." How do I get that number? For residential, one quarter of your residential property tax will now be set by the province. For businesses, over 50% of the business property tax mill rate will be set by the province to fund education. That's the fourth area of, frankly, just chaos.

The fifth area is health. We heard a debate earlier today about hospital closings. Mike Harris has said that he is planning to essentially freeze health spending for 10 years. In 1992, health spending in Ontario was roughly $17.5 billion. Mike Harris has said that come the next election, around the year 2000, health spending will be essentially the same, $17.5 billion to $18 billion. We'll have gone 10 years, we'll have seen a growth in the population of well over 10%, I think we'll see another quarter of a million people over the age of 65 in the province, but the publicly funded health system money will essentially have been frozen for 10 years.

It's no wonder we're starting to see the stresses and strains on our health system. The first big stress and strain for many of us in communities is hospital closings. I have this fear that we are seeing two ships pass in the night. One ship is the growing need by our aging and growing population for health services, with clearly a larger demand down the road. At the same time, the hospital boat is going the other way, that is, it is closing. We are seeing substantially fewer services in our hospital sector.

The doctors, and I give them a lot of credit, have an agreement with the government that essentially immunizes them from this. They're okay. I take my hat off to them. The doctors reached, it looks like, a very good agreement between themselves and the government, calling for an increase in spending on physicians, calling for a lot of extra-billing opportunities. They're going to be able to come forward with a bunch of things, new, creative ways of billing, of charging people indirectly. If I'm not mistaken, the auto bill that we passed recently transferred about $100 million of cost on to our auto insurance bills and off the public bill. That's the fifth area of chaos out there.

The government set up something called the hospital restructuring commission to try and say this is at arm's length and then found, "We don't like the arm's length direction it's taking on rural hospitals, so we'll tell them to stop and we'll put together a policy to direct them there." I was quite surprised, actually, that Minister Leach didn't realize that it was inappropriate for a cabinet minister to

be communicating directly with the restructuring commission and asking them to do things. The whole restructuring commission, unfortunately, has been tainted with a perception that it wasn't free from political interference.

The sixth area I'd like to talk about is youth unemployment. You may or may not recall — who does? — but I have been saying for many months that youth unemployment is a serious problem in the province of Ontario. I can remember Premier Harris saying: "Your figures are all wrong. You don't understand. It's a problem that's being solved," and what not. Finally, he was forced to admit it is a serious problem.

I have been particularly disturbed about our youth unemployment. We have seen job growth in the last few months, but it has not been with our young people. Ontario has a substantially higher unemployment rate among young people than the rest of Canada. We pride ourselves in Ontario on being an economic leader, but young people do better outside of Ontario than they do in Ontario. In the most recent numbers which came out in July, we see that the unemployment rate among young people a year ago was 16.4%; today it's 18.3% — up dramatically in Ontario, the unemployment rate among young people. We see that the number of young people unemployed has increased by 25,000; there are 25,000 more young people out of work today than there were a year ago.

The reason I raise that is because some members in the House listen to the exchanges that the opposition have with the Premier, and the Premier has always been saying: "You people are all wet. There's no big problem." I will admit that I am happy to see him finally acknowledge that there is a serious problem among our young people. And not only that: We are punishing our young people in so many ways — tuition fees. Make no mistake about it; it is the young people who are being asked to make up, through tuition fees, the cutbacks in grants to colleges and universities. I've said this before. The MBA program of my old alma mater, Western, used to be $3,000 a year. It's going to $18,000 a year, and that's just the starting point; it's going to keep going up from there. That won't be just the MBA program. It will be many of the "preferred" faculties, preferred in the sense of, "Where might I have the best chance of getting a job?"

Among our young people there is this sense of concern and in some respects despair, so I welcome all the premiers' saying that they are going to begin focusing on youth unemployment. We've been saying that for 24 months and we'll hold the government to deliver on that promise.

The seventh area is Ontario Hydro. For the last week we've been bombarded on Ontario Hydro. The parliamentary assistant said, "We've got to run things like a business." Well, I was mildly amused and perhaps more than slightly disappointed. The Premier appointed an individual to chair Hydro, an individual, by all accounts, well regarded in the business community. But that individual has been two years as chair of Hydro, with a not inconsequential salary.

My experience of business people is that you jump in to that job and you find out what the problem is. If you're the chairman and two years later you find the problem, the board normally asks some questions: "I don't understand. What took you two years to find out where these problems were? Were there no reports? Did no one tell you?" It was just curious to me that it was two years before this businesslike approach, with the high-powered business people suddenly bringing their microscope to the situation. It took them two years? It's unusual. It raises some questions for me. What was going on there? Were the lights out for two years in the office? What happened?

**1630**

The eighth area I want to talk about, of the government moving on a broad front designed to, I believe, destabilize the province, is privatization. The parliamentary assistant mentioned there's a public accountability act coming forward. If you want to begin to add a note of uncertainty through our whole public sector, not just the Ontario public service — bear in mind, one out of five jobs in Ontario is related to the public sector.

The government has decided to put a cloud over all that and has decided to essentially say, "Everything's open to privatization." I'm looking forward to the public accountability act because it will require all of our public sector to look at private sector alternatives, to look at the whole business of where they may privatize.

As a matter of fact the arbitrators, and this is a major part of Bill 136 — it may take me a moment to find it, and hopefully I can before people get too impatient. I'm now on Bill 136. That's the bill that in my opinion is a direct challenge to the organized labour movement. It's sort of like: "There. Now we want to fight."

One of the directions to the arbitrator is that they must look at benchmarks versus the private sector in determining their settlements. All of that's kind of legal jargon, but it is part of a well-thought-out Mike Harris plan to move forward with broad-scale privatization in our public sector.

People say, "What's so bad about that?" I'll say this: It's a bit like any organization being told: "You should be aware we are thinking getting rid of your job at any time." So for our whole public sector now we create this mood of uncertainty because it's clear that Mike Harris's arbitrators, the arbitrators he will appoint, must look at: "Could the private sector do this job more cheaply?" The public sector accountability act the government says it is going to bring in forces all the public organizations to do what's called, in the jargon, benchmark.

The reason I raise this is, here we are, Canada with a solid economy, and Ontario, after a fairly disappointing 1996-97, it's been a good year to date, but here we are, about ready to pour cold water on Ontario. The downloading, the dumping on to municipalities and the uncertainty it will create among our seniors and our young people who rely on social assistance, among our health sector who rely on our ambulance services and public health, is going to be the first area of confusion.

We've passed one bill on property tax. We've now got another huge bill that we've got to pass to try to patch up that bill that we only passed a few weeks ago, and furthermore the bill on property tax actually leaves most of the decisions to the Minister of Finance, which by the way I'm surprised the Conservative caucus agrees to, because they've always been strong proponents of dealing with tax issues out in the public and what not. The Minister of Finance will be able, by regulation, to set tax rates on property. To me, it's totally inconsistent with everything else you talk about in the public domain.

The attack on labour: We saw today in the gallery, for the public's information, a demonstration by organized labour. Organized labour cannot ignore the challenge you've thrown at them with this bill called Bill 136, and we await the education bill which I think could similarly challenge our education sector. The health sector's in some kind of turmoil. As I said earlier, the doctors seem to have emerged immunized, but the rest of the health sector is moving into a condition of critical.

We continue to see problems with youth unemployment. Our young people are the ones who are being asked to bear the brunt of so much, and why? I can't ignore this: the government has to find $5 billion to give a tax break that goes to the best-off in this province. The young people say: "Boy, oh boy, oh boy, this is some kind of province I live in. Those with jobs that are well paying are getting huge tax breaks, and me, I can't find a job," or, "I'm trying to pay for my college or university career and I'm being asked to pay huge tuition increases and to go out and borrow that money to do that."

All of our public sector is under a cloud right now. Privatization may in the public's mind be a popular thing, but I'm not sure if any organization can handle this degree of change and problems.

Just to wrap up, I appreciate a chance to comment on the supply bill. This, as I said earlier and the public perhaps is aware of it, is the bill that authorizes the government to pay its bills and it is quite in order, but it is an opportunity for all of us on all sides of the House to express our views.

I would just say in closing that if any business tried to run a business the way Mike Harris is running the government, you would find that profits would slip and you would lose the confidence of your organization and of the consumers, in this case the taxpayers. I'm seriously afraid that over the next 12 months, with all this planned chaos, we're going to pour so much water on the Ontario economy that we'll also lose the one thing we have going, a fairly solid economy.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Did the Liberals ask to split the time?

**The Acting Speaker:** We agreed to split the time. The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I am pleased to be able to speak to concerns that significantly impact on my area, not just in Windsor but in Windsor and Essex county. Certainly it's in order to have a supply bill; the government certainly needs money to continue to operate.

I find it's a very interesting time to talk about exactly the direction the government is going in, given that we have three by-elections in Ontario today, and one is certainly in my home town of Windsor, in the riding of Windsor-Riverside. It's given us some unique opportunities as MPPs, all of us, because I know all of us have been involved in some way, after hours, helping our local candidates run in those by-elections.

Let me start by saying that in June of this year I struck a community council and decided at the two-year anniversary of the government's term I would ask people of all political stripes, not just Liberals, but Tories, NDP, labour supporters, business supporters, to sit down and talk about their feelings of important issues concerning our community directly related to the provincial government.

My biggest surprise at the first community council meeting was that there was not one mention of the tax cut. The one issue this government could hang its hat on that would go over so well with the voting public was its tax cut. There are so many other overriding issues today that at this community council, represented by all parties, there was not one mention of the tax cut. I found that fascinating.

**1640**

What they did talk about was health care. If you've been in this House at all, you know that in Essex county we have some significant issues with this government's delivery of health care service in Essex county. That certainly hasn't changed over the course of the last couple of months. In the last few weeks, because all of us have had a chance to be at home in our ridings, I think many of you are beginning to agree with me that this government has made major errors in its delivery of the health care system and services to people.

What are they telling me? Health care is their number one concern. They're very concerned about children and the negative impacts this government has had on children. They're also telling us that they're very concerned about young people. In fact, we spent at least half an hour of a one-hour meeting of this community council in Windsor talking about young people and how many strikes they now have against them thanks to the policies of the provincial government.

I had to smile when the Premier today stood up and said that he was pleased to attend the premiers' conference out east with all the 10 premiers. He said, "We're going to the feds and we're going to talk about how important the young people are." I'm begging the Premier to look in his own backyard. Here is the same Premier who gutted 30% of all expenditures for the youth summer programs. Here is the same minister who took the average student working on that program, who used to collect a paycheque in the summer for 10 weeks, now collecting a paycheque for six weeks — all this at the same time they're facing increased tuition when they return to school in September. Time will be the judge for this government on youth employment

programs. The very Premier who is trying to lobby for young people isn't taking care of his own programs and has in no way made young people a priority here in Ontario.

It gave me an opportunity, with the leader of our party, to strike the McGuinty task force on children. We had a very informative meeting in Belleville just this past Friday to talk about exactly what the government is not doing for children when people who work with children in Ontario know exactly what kids need to level the playing field and get them going in life. We found many examples of what the government has not responded to. We have been reported to death, frankly, on what children need, especially children at risk. The government has been non-responsive. If anything, it has been detrimental in its policies for children.

The first thing they did when they took office, and they were proud to do it, was cut welfare rates. In fact, they spiked up in the polls after they did that. Everyone thought that was wonderful: "Those damned welfare people; they shouldn't get that 20%. They should just be cut." This government didn't recognize that half of the people are children, that 500,000 of them were kids, and none of them want to recognize that today, that it all trickles down so in the end it was those children who were the most affected by those changes in social welfare and the level of moneys they were being given. That's hardly recognition that this government has children as a priority.

If we look in my community — I remember very well, because I made sure every MPP in this House knew how many days were left to go before they shut emergency service on the west side of Windsor. I know all the MPPs remember that they were getting pages that said, "Eighteen days to go," and then they got, "17 days to go," because we were very desperate to get the Minister of Health to understand that on that date of April 18 we were losing yet another emergency service in Windsor. Remember, we've gone from four hospitals to two hospitals. You've heard about this probably a hundred times. If your government is so intent on reinvesting, if your government is intent on coming here and asking for money to run the province, the people of Essex county would like to know why you're not reinvesting in Essex county.

We can go on. Why are we getting a letter from the hospital in Mr Hudak's riding: "Please come and see, because we're desperate"? Why would it be that the people in Mr Runciman's riding are so concerned about the Brockville Psychiatric Hospital? "With a long sigh, he adds that all his energies now will be summoned to deal with the Brockville hospital problem."

Here's a minister at the cabinet table who set up the Health Services Restructuring Commission. Mr Runciman's own hand and fingerprints are on the very commission that closed his hospital. Today he wants to deal with the hospital problem? I say to the minister, you were at the table and you could have made a huge difference at your own cabinet table. What that tells me is that even the ministers themselves are completely not responding to the concerns of where they come from. It's no wonder that the Conservative backbenchers have absolutely no voice: Neither do the ministers. I have to question whether Mr Runciman even raised the issue at cabinet table. Was there any concern at all that they were going to lose $36.7 million out of that local economy?

Today he's concerned about jobs in Brockville? He didn't know last year when this was being planned that $36 million would be gone from the economy when they closed the Brockville hospital? Just last week they make the final report on the restructuring commission, and it's news that there's a major impact on the community as a whole when you shut a hospital down?

I find that amazing. You can't go home to your riding and try to support the people at home, when you sit at the cabinet table and set the motions, set the detail and the timetable for when this is going to happen and hurt the very people you represent. That is your responsibility. You cannot go home and sing from a different song sheet. You are obliged to say the same thing at the cabinet table as well as back home in your constituency office.

I'll tell you, when you come from Windsor, you don't have to go far to find example after example of people who are waiting incredible lengths of time in our emergency wards. Remember, we only have two left now. I remember very well asking the minister the day it closed and the next day and the day after that one of our hospitals with a remaining emergency service only has the bay space for two ambulances to pull in at any one time.

You only have to visit our hospital, Hotel Dieu, right downtown, to see that on numerous occasions we have some four ambulances pulling patients into that hospital. That was the hospital that was supposed to get the reinvestment before you closed down the last emergency room. Well, you didn't reinvest. We still only have room for two ambulances to pull up. Now, at 2 am on a Saturday, when you've got a plethora of patients waiting for service, the ambulance attendants are rolling the patients down the driveway to get into the emergency door.

You think you're going to come down to Windsor-Riverside during a by-election and say that you're taking care of health services? Where I come from, the people of Windsor-Riverside aren't fooled for a minute. Certainly the people in Windsor-Sandwich, who've dealt with the closure of the hospital of Windsor Western are all too familiar with your broken promises and, "It's not my plan to close hospitals." Let me tell you, they know very well what's going on.

There's a significant senior population too. What Gary McNamara has been discovering is that there are seniors in nursing homes in his riding who — well, they're not sure exactly, because the nursing home uses ambulance service. But that's being downloaded by this government on to the municipality. The town of Tecumseh, which has little or no funding, and of course that's being cut, have to ask, "Who's going to pay for the ambulance service?"

We've got one nursing home that averages 10 to 12 ambulance visits per week. These are the frail and elderly who live there, whose families will be paying that cost, if they have family, and many may or may not.

I'm asking you to go home to your ridings, MPPs, and find out if you're suffering the same fate as these people in Tecumseh. Who's looking out for them? You've slapped on new user fees right across the board that have affected our seniors.

It was Mr Manzone on Lesperance Road who was the first to coin the phrase, "How many months in a year?" The government had to do a very quick backtrack, because not only did they add a $100 user fee per year for drug coverage, you stole the money again within three months of reaching that year. You were going back to them and taking more. I remember the clips during the election when the government won the first time around and they said, "No new user fees." Well, it's a crock. Nobody believes that, nobody, because they're paying for it today.

**1650**

That's what Gary McNamara is hearing at the door, and how very amusing to see that your PC candidate in Windsor-Riverside doesn't have the nerve to put "Progressive Conservative" on the lawn sign or to use your traditional lawn sign colours. I don't blame him. God, who'd want to run for that party where I come from? It's been an absolute disaster. Our health system is absolutely in crisis and not one of you will respond, least of all your minister and certainly not the Premier, even though we've gone to him directly with our concerns.

Let me tell you, yesterday the Toronto Star banner headline read that we're going to fund another watchdog for the health care system. Did we read that in the Toronto Star yesterday? A "new watchdog" for the health care system because they want to find out if there are any gaps in the health care service. I just want to tell the minister and the Premier, I am prepared to tell you that information for free. You don't need to spend $3 million for a new bureaucracy to see if there are gaps in the health care system. Come to Windsor and our people will tell you that for free, for absolutely nothing. There are huge gaps in the health care service in Windsor, huge gaps.

I expect the government to be responsive. The last time your health minister came to Windsor, he was chased right back out on the highway with every media person yelling, "Show us the money." We're tired of all your talking about it. You've been talking about MRI for five years. We still don't have one.

Let me mention that this minister, just to get the scoop supposedly on a town hall that we were having on health care, decides to announce the Windsor-Essex county area as underserviced. Let me tell you what's happened to Windsor and Essex county since the underserviced designation. The minister made a supply for it even though we said it won't do us any good, but we have to do it because it was yet one more hurdle that he offered up to us; "Gee, you haven't even applied for the designation." Fine, so we applied. Today, months after this new underserviced designation for doctors, we have 16 fewer family doctors. We're not even moving in the right direction. Is this news? No, because we offered that information to the minister before. We said, "Our retirement rate of family doctors in Windsor-Essex county is huge, so we need some immediate emergency intervention."

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My apologies to my eloquent friend and colleague. Will you please kindly check if a quorum is present?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is a quorum present?

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I would ask the benevolence, the understanding of the House: We will be splitting our time among our colleagues —

**Interjection:** Agreed.

**Mr Pouliot:** — the time that is available to us, but I want to bring your attention to a point of order before you recognize me.

It wasn't too long ago, in fact a minute or two ago, that we were talking about supply. We wanted to remind you by way of a quorum to get the attention of the House, as many people as possible here, because what the member for Windsor had to say, be it parochial, was — and I rise on this point of order — really important. It's important that people have a firsthand opportunity to listen to the remaining time allocation for the member for Windsor.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe your point of order is to ask to split the time. Is that your request?

**Mr Pouliot:** To let her continue, Mr Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker**: Order. You were recognized as the next speaker. The member for Windsor-Sandwich had not returned. On the basis that you called a quorum call, you were recognized as the speaker. You've asked the question whether you can split the time with your caucus colleagues and it was agreed. You have the floor.

**Mr Pouliot:** I need not remind you of the utmost respect that I have for your tenure and for you, sir, and I most graciously accept your ruling.

Periodically the House is asked to pay its bills, to lend support, to acquiesce to a motion of supply so the business of the state can take place. Bills have to be paid at the end of quarters, at the end of every month. The government has chosen that this would be the day when we're able and allowed to address supply.

I listened carefully to the opening remarks by the parliamentary assistant, which in a convincing manner conveyed to the House that this government is saving a great deal of taxpayers' money, that the Progressive Conservative government in power now in Ontario has

dealt with the deficit left by previous administrations, and that all is well in Ontario: that we have a recovery of unprecedented proportions, that they can really see things picking up, more people working.

But of course they don't want to talk about youth unemployment, about the real pain that's out there, concrete and palpable, about hundreds of thousands of young Ontarians not able to find meaningful employment. They don't wish to talk about the highest level of employment among our young people. Of course not. They don't wish to talk about the downloading, about the passing-the-buck exercise that is presently taking place in Ontario.

If you were to travel, sir, to more than 800 municipalities in Ontario and ask the mayors, the reeves, the council people if they will be able, next year or the year after, to enact a decrease in general purpose, in municipal taxes, almost inevitably each and every one of them would say, "It cannot be done." Mike Harris and his gang have systematically, deliberately chosen to choke the municipalities by giving them more responsibility and less money to pay for those services. That's the truth.

I wish that the parliamentary assistant and the minister would avail themselves of every opportunity, every time, to tell us the other side of the ledger. There's a lot of fear, a lot of anxiety, a lot of "I don't know" four months before they're about to embark on their new responsibility.

**1700**

By way of example, let me give you more numbers on the downloading, on passing the buck to the less fortunate. Algoma district is downloading $43.7 million to $44.9 million; there's a narrow range here. What does it mean if you occupy an average house? It means anywhere between $982 per annum — that's more money that you'll have to fork over, to pay out for the services you're now getting. If you live in Algoma and if you happen to be listening this afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of Algoma, this is what you're about to face. No words will replace the negative impact this will have on the standard of living and lifestyle of your families, ladies and gentlemen of Algoma: $982 to $1,010 more coming out of your pocket.

It has been decreed by Mike Harris and the gang that to satisfy the insatiable appetite of the rich ones on Bay Street by way of a 30% tax benefit, you, madame, and you, monsieur in Algoma, will have to pay. You will be filling their pockets.

They will filter the money, they will launder the money; it's going to Bay Street, to those who need it the least. Those who need it the most will have to fork over la payola because Harris is downloading. That's a 25% increase. The fascinating world of sewer and water is going to cost one heck of a lot of money. Tell that to the people of Algoma. Tell them that it's a quarter more, 25% more, and it's coming very soon.

Cochrane district, get ready, 31.6%; Essex county, 3.7% to 4%. Be quiet in Essex, ladies and gentlemen, 3.7% to 4% is a lot of money but it's not as much as other people's, because other people are getting gouged. If this were elsewhere, there would be a warrant for the Premier's arrest. They wouldn't say, "Hail to the chief"; they would say, "Jail to the chief."

Speaker, really, you're a citizen. I've been following your career very closely. I know you to be an educated person. You know who is telling the truth. You're an honest person. You're a God-fearing man. Is it up to him and that lot to give to the rich?

If you make $247,000 per year — one should be so fortunate — you save $15,000. If you make $1 million you save a lot more because there is a progression. But if you have a family of four and you make $25,000 per year, you save $450 in the tax cut. If the same family lives in Algoma, they receive in one pocket $450 and from the other pocket they have to shell out, to fork over, $1,010. Is this consistent and reasonable? Is it not like mugging the homeowner? Really, and the list goes on and on.

Hamilton-Wentworth, are you listening? "A 7.1% to 7.5 % increase," says Mike Harris. Kenora district, northwestern Ontario, vast and magnificent, a 28.7% to 30% increase because you'll have to pay for police services; you'll have to pay for ambulance service; you'll pay the cost of the library, assessment, sewer and water, increasing costs because they're passing the buck. They're passing the buck to their rich friends — your dollars, ladies and gentlemen. They're passing responsibilities to the municipalities.

During the last election the same person, the head of the government of the day, lamented throughout the province as he took his travelling circus from village to village, tried to sell what was to become political snake oil two years later, tried to sell his salade by saying that your taxes — there's only one taxpayer. In the final analysis, when all is said is done, "I, Mike Harris, promise that you will see a decrease in your property tax." A 31% increase in Cochrane is not a decrease. It's almost one third more than what they're actually paying. What are you doing? You're going to have a straitjacket; you're choking people. They don't have a chance to live because they have to pay for essential services that used to be paid for by the province.

Today we're asked to approve the motion for supply so that the government can pursue its ill-fated policies for another quarter. People are not opposed to change. I meet no one who is reluctant to accept changes. Changes occur all the time. But I meet a lot of people who are reminding the government that it has overestimated the capacity and the willingness of the citizens they govern, whom they represent, to accept that many changes at once. We don't yet know the consequences because they're going too fast.

People are saying to Premier Harris and the gang: "Put the brakes on. You don't know what you're doing." Proof of it is that on some bills you have 40, 50, 60 amendments. You're only four months away from implementation, when your municipal world is about to change big time. When you ask, "Who will pay for this; what will be the cost of this?" the government is guessing.

When all is said and done, when the axe falls, when January 1, 1998, strikes, if you are a property taxpayer or if you're renting, in most cases, the great majority of cases, you will not only pay more but you will pay a lot more for the same services.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you please check to see if there is a quorum? I don't believe there is.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Could you please check if we have a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon.

**1710**

**Mr Pouliot:** Mr Speaker, if you live in the special part of Ontario, that of the Niagara region, if you own some property, if you are a renter, expect your municipal taxes to increase by 5.7% to 6.6% because of Mike Harris and the gang. No more, sir, nothing else. And not included in those statistics is the cost of highways, because they're downloading provincial highways. They've now become municipal highways. You are asked, if you are a municipal councillor, to either sell out or buy in, so for a few dollars, for the lure, the seduction of a lump sum payment, you take on in perpetuity the responsibility of maintaining, repairing, expanding and building the lifeline, the highway, and inevitably you're shortchanged. Those deals can only lead to increased poverty among the municipalities, because this government does not give you much of a choice. You don't have bargaining power. They hold a gun to you, "You accept or we shoot to kill," in the context of downloading, nothing short of that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm finding some of your remarks a bit too derogatory. It could be set in a tone which is more dignified, and I think, knowing you, you'll be able to achieve that.

**Mr Pouliot:** Speaker, with the highest of respect, I'm somewhat startled that you found my comments or my words provocative or a little bold or strong. If I may be so bold, heck, maybe I've gone too far and that's what you wish to convey, but I ask you to put yourself in my shoes, representing some of the remote communities. You have to come here and you would be as mad as hell in the face of what's about to happen when the aspirations are being taken out. The rules only permit some latitude when you describe, and yes, when you accuse — because they had the choice; it could have been otherwise — and you in your capacity are reminding me that there are some thresholds. I didn't refer to them as bandits. I didn't do that. I didn't refer to some members of the cabinet as a den of thieves. I did not do that, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think you're pushing the issue a bit too much. All I'm asking you is to use dignified language, and knowing you, you are so capable of doing it.

**Mr Pouliot:** Mr Speaker, let it be a lesson to all of us that when we believe and we think we know someone, sometimes we don't know them all that well.

Sudbury district: Would you not be upset, in the privacy and comfort of your home, if you were to be hit with 17.7% to 18%? How dignified would you be? When you have no money in your pocket, you cannot afford the dignity. You'd be mad as hell.

Then they're about to download the highways — because you're going to work, you're going to Falconbridge, you're going to Inco. You've got to put a paycheque on the table. You have not forgotten those days, the pay stub, when the family gets together and talks about the allocation of money. Right? But now the highway that you take to go and mine the resources, harvest the trees, you're going to have to pay for it. It used to be a provincial responsibility, but Mike Harris and the gang have to fill the pockets, have to satisfy the appetite of those who can run the fastest. You don't meet them. You hear about them. You read about them. And yet, they're not hiding. They're at the Toronto Club and I want to wish them well.

Frank Stronach made 38 million bucks in one year. He works hard, doesn't he? So do you, Speaker. Frank Stronach does not have to go and knock on doors like you have to, Speaker, and sell the hardest commodity in the world, that of your representation. No, no, he rakes it in, and that's okay, but what is not okay is that there is no capping. Frank Stronach must think that Santa Claus comes to visit every weekend, because if you make $15,000 —

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With all respect to my honourable colleague, I find offensive the direction of his comments. Mr Stronach happens to be a constituent of mine who has invested a great deal of money in this province, has created many, many —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Take your seat, please. I don't find this a point of order. The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** The point is well taken, and in the future I'll be able to better appreciate the special relationship that you and your constituent have.

I am not the one saying this. It was in the Globe and Mail, in the Report on Business. I am not wishing the gentleman ill. I know he's a philanthropist. I know him to be generous.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Scarborough East, please.

**Mr Pouliot:** What I'm saying is that it is beyond the obscene. It is actually porcine to be given a 30% tax break when you make that much money — 38 million bucks in one year — and at the same time you go and shut hospitals and you put elderly people in the corridors. Does it make any sense to you? Don't you get mad as hell, Speaker, when you hear that?

We're all on a waiting list. You heard the true story of one family who went to visit their father. That could be any one of us. The person was dead, dead, dead, died in the corridor, lack of care and had been there since the day before. "How are you, Dad?" No response. Dead.

And Frank Stronach pockets 30% of the provincial income tax and I'm mad? You're darned right I'm mad and I have a right to be because I am a citizen, un citoyen, and I have a voice. When I was afraid, they stepped over me and I got up one morning and I said, "No, I am not rich, nor am I afraid." C'est fini. I don't have to be afraid because I am a citizen and I am paying for all this and I am tired of paying for all this. They're changing too much and they're changing it too fast. The police association is against them, those women and men in blue. The teachers have had it up to here. The nurses are anxious. They're being fired by the thousands.

And they're saying that they're spending more money than ever on health care? Well, per capita, they're spending less. You know that and I know that. We have relatives, we have friends, sometimes ourselves, go and visit a hospital and the care isn't the same. Bring a member of your family and make sure they bring a bar of soap with them. The days of the back rub, they're long gone. Keep your health, , because people are overworked. They're being asked to take on more responsibilities because the government has to satisfy an agenda of a 30% tax cut.

**1720**

Don't get me wrong. We mostly think that we're paying a lot; in fact, too much taxes. But this is disproportionate. If you make $25,000 a year family income, spouse, Mr and Mrs Canada, two children, you save $450. If you make $247,000, you save $15,000. If you make $800,000, you save 10 times more. Does it make sense to you? It doesn't make a lot of sense to me. Yet you'll pick it up. What you save on the one hand, you will have to pay for the downloading.

The Rainy River district: My leader is from Rainy River, northwestern Ontario bordering on the sister province of Manitoba, where we're about to make major purchases of hydro. Rainy River, 28% to 29.3%. I know people in Rainy River, people who work at the mill, good, honest, salt-of-the-earth hardworking people — 28% to 29%. Thanks a lot, Mike. Way to go, Mikey. I guess we don't tread the same circles, we don't have the same friends.

We certainly have very little influence, because if we live in Manitouwadge, where I live, in Marathon, anywhere in the great riding of Lake Nipigon — we're 26% of the overall land mass. We go all the way to Hudson Bay. It's a different life there. You've been there, Speaker, with the Office of the Ombudsman. I remember. What are we going to say? Are we going to say thank you? Mixing things up. We're a little afraid, we're anxious. We don't know how much it's going to cost and we don't fully know what we're going to pay for, four months before it's about to happen. The municipal elections and the school board elections are to take place some time this November, and today is August 18. We're asking to know about consistency, about being reasonable, and those are logical, legitimate questions.

I want to share with you — I have with me the Rural Review: The Voice of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, and this is volume 2, July 1997, last month. Question:

"What's Happening?

"To Survive You Need to Know!!

"I am very concerned about the lack of information being passed down speedily to the municipalities by the province and at the failure of our municipalities to fully grasp the gravity of what we are going to have to deal with in the future. It further concerns me that in November we will be seeing newly elected officials who have no concept of the magnitude of the changes and how they will cope." Scary, isn't it? "They are going to be frustrated.

"Here are some of the responsibilities which will henceforth be assumed by municipalities: policing costs...." You pay now. The province used to pay if you were fewer than 5,000 in your village, in your small town. No, no. Starting in January you will pay the full cost.

Social housing: You know the demographics. We have an aging population, not only in Ontario but in Canada, and more people. You have to satisfy the demand, you have to offer shelter. The municipalities will be asked to take on an important share, so it's going to cost more.

Land ambulance costs: Call 911. No one's immune. But the municipality will have to pay for the land ambulance costs.

Loss of the farm tax rebate. I see that the minister is here and I thank him. I guess what you save on the farm you lose on the house. Is that the way it goes? Because the money has to come from someplace, the municipalities have to get the services.

The managed forest rebate and business occupancy tax — a loss of $667 million. That's the business occupancy tax. Not ironically, you know who benefits by that? You pay so much per square foot. Take the bank towers in Toronto. Just step out on the front steps of the Legislature and look up. What you will see is insurance and bank towers, the conglomerates, these ensembles of cement and glass. There's a lot of money there. They're going to benefit because they will pay far less business occupancy tax.

Do you know who's going to pick up the slack? The small business people. You know the ma-and-pa stores, the franchisees? They're going to pick up the business occupancy tax because the big banks are going from 75% to 42%. The money has to come from someplace, and Mike and the gang have the audacity to tell people: "You should tighten up your belts. You've been living too well. You should streamline. You should cut your municipal costs and pass the savings along to municipalities."

They've been doing that for years. Municipal council representatives are very responsible, but there is a downloading of extraordinary proportions. That's what's

happening. While we are busy trying to restructure at the province's request, the province is making dramatic changes to local municipal governments, leaving more and more of us frustrated and bewildered because we don't know enough about what is going on.

You ask a question one week, you must come back the second week to get an answer and then they put you on hold again because it's not definite. It changes. It seems that every second week they dim the lights and get their hands into that bag of snakes and come up with a different answer.

I'll give you an example. A few weeks back I was in a small municipality in the great riding of Lake Nipigon and I asked the reeve, the mayor of a small town: "Jim, are you aware that starting January 1, if one of your citizens, someone living in town, is on general assistance, is on welfare, and she or he goes to see the doctor, gets a prescription and goes to the pharmacy, now you will have to pay 50%? What do you know, Mayor Jim, about the drug formulary? Do you know how much it's going to cost you? It's going to cost you 50%." "I don't have a clue, Gilles. The council people" — this is a person with 15 years' experience — "don't know anything. They've never had to do it." Now they will be asked not only to know more but to administer half the cost if you're on general assistance.

It makes no sense at all. Who's going to pay? I'll tell you, with respect, who's going to pay. The small homeowners are going to pay, the property owners are going to pay, the renters are going to pay and the ones who can best pay are getting such a tax break that it leaves them a lot better off regardless of who lives in whose riding.

I'm reminded that with those people you shouldn't say much if you know your place. You reminded me of my place, Speaker, that with those people you pay and then you shy away. You get into the background, you get into the distance; you don't disturb the established order.

Pardon me, we still have a voice. The people of rural Ontario are saying: "Mr Harris, you're going too far. Put the brakes on. Too many changes at once, and too costly."

**1730**

Policing options in a changing Ontario: 576 communities. To serve and protect — in some small towns they can't afford it. I know in Manitouwadge where I live, you're looking at $600,000 more per year. You're looking at property taxes on policing alone going up by an extra $400 to $450 per household. We mine the gold, we don't keep the gold. This goes beyond the ability of someone to pay. What's going on here? Why do that? We know it's unethical. We know an independent body of jurists would not allow it. We know well-thinking philosophers would not contemplate it. We know any other government would not tolerate it, would not impose it. Why are they so adamant? I guess revolutionaries sometimes hurt people, and they truly believe that they're helping and they're finding out — with their philosophy they find it difficult to help people. They get it all wrong.

People want a chance to grow, they want to look to the future and say it will offer better than today, and people have some resolve. We know that sometimes you have to pull back a bit and then go forward. We know that the less fortunate — it reminds me that the blind help the lame and hey march forward. This administration does not associate with the marginalized and the less fortunate. Why is that? Is it that people are becoming too prosperous? Is it that ordinary people, the middle class, which is being eroded quickly, poses a threat to anyone? Is it that shared prosperity is hurting the state? Why? Why do all this? Why do it so deeply, so profoundly? Why hurt, and hurt those who can least defend themselves? This is what their agenda is all about. It's nothing short of that.

The downloading response goes on and on. The government says: "Of all the money that we're raking in, because we're spending less, we've put a little pool of money aside. In our back pocket, if you look closely, we have some $500 million." We get mesmerized. We say, "Well, $500 million, la manna from heaven. That's a lot of money." No, they've taken $1.5 billion out and then they will come and really have you believe they're doing you a favour by putting a few dollars of your own money into the pool. It won't work. People are wising up to the tactics, the strategies of this government.

I have agreed to share the time that was allocated, and we shall do so perhaps another day or maybe today.

Housing cost, the long-term cost associated with social housing: When we talk about social housing we must not underestimate the cost. Again, with the aging population, it's not everyone who has had the good fortune to latch on to a government pension or to a military service pension, for instance. It's not everyone who has worked many years as a civil servant or as a teacher or with Ontario Hydro, CNR, CPR etc. All this to say that you put in the years and you were and you are getting, if not a commendable, a pension worthy of notice. If you don't have a pension, a source of revenue which is consequential, there's a good chance that you too will be lining up for social housing. A provincial responsibility if there ever was one, but now who's going to pay? The people in the municipality.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** The poor.

**Mr Pouliot:** In other words, my colleague from Sault Ste Marie says the poor will pay.

**Mr Martin:** Absolutely.

**Mr Pouliot:** He's right on. Right on, no doubt. That will not change because the government is saying, "We won't take care of it any more because we're giving you a bit of a break on school taxes." Watch what will happen to the women and the men who are teachers. They will deal with the profession on a one-on-one basis. They have been waiting. They're almost salivating at the thought of negotiating or, I should say, dictating to teachers. They look at the pool of money, that hard-earned money under the auspices of the teachers' superannuation plan, and they revel. It brings out the worst in them. They wish they could have not one but both hands in the pension plan.

Well, guess what? I predict that they will make an effort to lessen their contribution to the teachers' pension plan. If there are teachers who are listening at the present time, I say, "Beware of what's coming down the pipe with those people. You're about to be ambushed. Be prepared for the worst. They will hit your pension plan, because they will invite gurus and will have them spell out that for whatever time period, under whatever defined terms that your pension will be given to you; never any improvement, though, and the rest of it they'll put in the general fund."

The general fund is the big vat where the toxicity level gets higher and higher by the day. Then they take little cups and they dole out the money, a little here, a little to this ministry, but everything comes in. Then they will negotiate with the teachers because the school boards won't have the power to levy. School boards no longer will have the power in a few months to say: "A property's worth so much. We will raise or decrease taxes." No, that's tout finis. Mike and the gang will dictate and then they will deal with the people who educate our sons and daughters, and it does not augur very well. It does not bode well. They're about to get hit big time.

That's okay with that lot because unless you are very privileged, you can expect to tighten your belt. The police force, the OPP, police people at the municipal level have said they'll be watching Bill 136 carefully. You saw what happened in the gallery today, the spontaneous response of people who have had enough, of people who said today: "I will go to the Legislature and I will stand up. I refuse to die on my knees. I don't want to buy in. I don't want to sell out. I am a citizen and I'm standing up in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario." Spontaneously people have said, "I've had enough." The final straw, the threshold: "We're not going to take it any more." Who are those people, Speaker? They're people like you and me. They're ordinary citizens who are saying, "Enough is enough." The message comes back loud and clear: "Put the brakes on."

**Mr Martin:** It's obscene.

**Mr Pouliot:** We're paying for all this. It's obscene, my colleague from Sault Ste Marie says, and it's goes beyond: It's porcine. It should not be allowed to take place under any circumstances.

**1740**

Long-term costs: This is what the co-op housing federation estimates, that unfunded capital repair costs mean the province has underestimated the municipal cost of social housing by a bare minimum of $140 million. How can you make a mistake of $140 million? Suppose you don't have a clue and don't know what you're doing; you're just grabbing figures from all over the place and putting them in the marketplace and saying it'll come out in the wash. They're short 140 million bucks. Where is the money going to come from? You know where it's going to come from. You just watch your property taxes very carefully.

I know you to be meticulous, Speaker. I know you've been keeping your slips over the years. I know, with your most distinguished military service, that you don't misplace things. I know you to be very well organized, to be an excellent planner. We're all envious of your many qualities. Speaker, you'll be one of the first ones to jump. I see you shaking your head. I can see the pain in your face, Speaker, the distress. You don't want to get the bill, but as a citizen you shall get the bill. I want you to think, when you get that bill, that it's Mike Harris, that you and your most distinguished and elegant spouse, when you talk about it, say: "It's Mike Harris's fault. It need not happen." But you make a commendable salary. With your office of Deputy Speaker, sir, I know that you are getting what they call a stipend; in other words, you're getting an extra allocation, a little more money. It's not that much, that little more money, but it's going to help cover your taxes. Other people don't have the tenure or they don't have — never mind the supplementary allocation you benefit from. Be prepared, because you're going to get hit. You'll notice a difference.

We've had 76% of the people in Toronto, Mississauga, Etobicoke and York saying to the government: "We don't want your megacity. We're okay. We like the neighbourhood the way it is." The government says: "We will listen to people. We're not a dictatorship. We will listen to people." People went to vote en masse; many people went to the ballot box. Three quarters of them said, "No, we do not wish to have it," but the revolutionaries, members of the brigade, Mike Harris and his gang, have decided to shove it down people's throats.

Then they took the show beyond the metropolis. All across Ontario they're downloading, are closing hospitals. Padlock Mike is doing it, nobody else is doing it. More people in the corridors, and the elderly being asked to bend in half and shove into a taxi because there's no place at the hospital. You read almost on a daily basis now about the shortcomings.

Did Mike Harris and the gang promise during the last election that seniors would have to pay the first $100 under the drug program? I didn't hear that. In fact, I heard the Premier say, "I have no plans to close hospitals." No plans to close hospitals, but you're shutting down 22 hospitals. What are you doing? What do you mean? That's only two years ago. "I have no plans." In other words, "I will not shut hospitals." That's the Premier of the province. You have to believe someone some time. "I will honour my promises or I will resign." We have already just mentioned in 15 seconds two broken promises. It's blatant. It's the truth. There's only one thing missing here. Where is the resignation?

If it were any other place — go and see your friends, and if you were to ask, "Look at what was promised and look at what has happened, did Mike Harris lie during the last election?" what would your friends say? I'm not the one saying this. What would your friends —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, order.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I ask you to withdraw this immediately. You do it right now.

**Mr Pouliot:** I will withdraw, Speaker. I will withdraw it and I thank you, Speaker.

You see, what you have is a mere two very basic, very graphic examples of a person who chooses to shy away from the truth for the sake of getting your vote. I find this action despicable. I don't find this very honest. Then you go further to say —

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, you're playing with fire. You're using words that are totally unacceptable, and you know better than that, for sure.

**Mr Pouliot:** I thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I do apologize, but when you're caught in the context of a revolution, be it a Common Sense Revolution or otherwise, sometimes you are entering uncharted waters indeed. If I've been a little difficult, I do appreciate and I thank you that your good tenure, your good office, through you, sir, is putting me back on track.

Taxpayers' income: You'll love this. This is something else. The Common Sense Revolution — taxpayer income, $25,000: saving in year one, $425; year two, $638; year three, total saving when the 30% is implemented if you make $25,000 — hey, that's not rich, right? It's a poor but very adequate income — $1,913. If you make $50,000, twice the $25,000 of course: $4,052. If you make $75,000, you save $6,926. So you see, you make three times as much and you save four times as much, and then it escalates. If you make 10 times the $25,000, you save 30 times. Does it make sense to you? It doesn't make much sense to me. It is unjust. It is immoral. It is not what they teach you at school.

We know that some will be more fortunate, but come on, Mike, put the brakes on. Give your head a shake. What about a conscience? This is not what I would preach, if I were a person of the cloth, the people in the congregation in my parish. I would be ashamed to put their record through.

Only one taxpayer: This is a picture of M. Harris and it's the Common Sense Revolution. This was the catalogue during the last election, during those 41 days of election time when the writs were issued. This was what was being circulated: "We will work closely with municipalities to ensure that any actions we take will not result in increases to local property taxes."

You know what I'm getting at. This is what he said, not 50 years ago, and if he does not live by this document, this manifesto, he will tender his resignation. The question is: Where is it? Show me the letter. He said, "will not result in increases to local property taxes." Well, if you're in Rainy River, it says 28.5%, 29.3% in taxes; Algoma, 25% to 26% — I mean, "will not result," and they said: "Yes, it will result. It's coming down. Within four months, your taxes will go up because of the downloading."

The Premier said, "You will not have to pay," so he should resign. I expect that tomorrow, Premier, will be an extraordinary day, that the Premier will do the honourable thing while he has an ounce of dignity left, by tendering his resignation. "Because I, Mike Harris, have failed to live by the word of the Common Sense Revolution, Mr Speaker, I must inform you and I must inform my distinguished colleagues in the House that, effective immediately, I, Mike Harris, am tendering my resignation." The honourable thing to say, and I will say: "Well, one thing Mike Harris, the Premier, did, he died by the sword. At least he lived up to the commitment that he made in the Common Sense Revolution."

Then it will be interesting to see the meet-your-best-friend-every-five-minutes group gather. It will make the election of some other political organization pale in comparison to what's about to happen because we will have a new Premier. Oh, they will not call an election. We're not asking. We're just saying that you do what you said you would. You can't deliver the goods. You're not a person of honour if you don't do what you said you would, if you will not do what's in the document here, the Common Sense Revolution.

You know I'm telling the truth. You know that. If I'm telling the truth and I have the proof of it, there's a person opposite who is telling the opposite, so is that person telling the truth or not telling the truth? It's borderline to you, Speaker? It's not borderline to me, sir, because I know that I'm telling the truth.

"Fair share health care levy" — this is frightening. If people are not able to keep their health, if they don't want to end up in the corridor, what are they supposed to do? Make sure that they have the means to go to the United States of America so they can pay? Because he's cutting back, the health care is taking a beating.

Then again, in the Common Sense Revolution he says: "Protecting priority services." Some are protected, let's be fair. But in many cases, they're not as good. There aren't as many as there used to be and you have increasing user fees, which are a tax. But the Premier says there are no tax increases and there are no user fees. Well, if you use drugs, it makes you a user, does it not, when you filled that prescription? Oh, no, this is participation, you see. You're asked to participate. You become a partner in the program because he doesn't wish to have people say a user fee is a user fee. Let's call it what it is. If you use a prescription, you have to pay the first $100 and then you pay up to $6.11 per prescription. If you're an elderly person, that $100 is the difference between calling your sons or daughters, if they're in another part of Ontario, a couple of times a month. It means you might not be able to visit them because you have to make that difficult choice.

Mr Speaker, it's not easy, and you know very well it's not easy. I see you again shaking your head, asking yourself, "Where will it all stop?" I only wish we had more time because I notice that it's close to 6 of the clock and I will move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arnott, Ted | Wellington | PC | parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Baird, John R. | Nepean | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion |
| Barrett, Toby | Norfolk | PC | |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Sudbury | L | |
| Bassett, Isabel | St Andrew-St Patrick | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement |
| Beaubien, Marcel | Lambton | PC | |
| Bisson, Gilles | Cochrane South / -Sud | ND | deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Boushy, Dave | Sarnia | PC | |
| Boyd, Marion | London Centre / -Centre | ND | |
| Bradley, James J. | St Catharines | L | deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition |
| Brown, Jim | Scarborough West / -Ouest | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels |
| Brown, Michael A. | Algoma-Manitoulin | L | deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition |
| Carr, Gary | Oakville South / -Sud | PC | |
| Carroll, Jack | Chatham-Kent | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Castrilli, Annamarie | Downsview | L | |
| Christopherson, David | Hamilton Centre / -Centre | ND | |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Halton North / -Nord | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles |
| Churley, Marilyn | Riverdale | ND | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Cleary, John C. | Cornwall | L | |
| Clement, Tony | Brampton South / -Sud | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjoint parlementaire du premier ministre |
| Colle, Mike | Oakwood | L | |
| Conway, Sean G. | Renfrew North / -Nord | L | |
| Cordiano, Joseph | Lawrence | L | |
| Crozier, Bruce | Essex South / -Sud | L | |
| Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne | London North / -Nord | PC | Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| Curling, Alvin | Scarborough North / -Nord | L | deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition |
| Danford, Harry | Hastings-Peterborough | PC | parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales |
| DeFaria, Carl | Mississauga East / -Est | PC | |
| Doyle, Ed | Wentworth East / -Est | PC | deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement |
| Duncan, Dwight | Windsor-Walkerville | L | |

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet | Durham West / -Ouest | PC | Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Elliott, Brenda | Guelph | PC | |
| Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. | Parry Sound | PC | Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances |
| Fisher, Barbara | Bruce | PC | parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales |
| Flaherty, Jim | Durham Centre / -Centre | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général |
| Ford, Douglas B. | Etobicoke-Humber | PC | assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement |
| Fox, Gary | Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud | PC | |
| Froese, Tom | St Catharines-Brock | PC | parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Galt, Doug | Northumberland | PC | parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) du ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Gerretsen, John | Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles | L | chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition |
| Gilchrist, Steve | Scarborough East / -Est | PC | parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Grandmaître, Bernard | Ottawa East / -Est | L | |
| Gravelle, Michael | Port Arthur | L | |
| Grimmett, Bill | Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances |
| Guzzo, Garry J. | Ottawa-Rideau | PC | |
| Hampton, Howard | Rainy River | ND | Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Oxford | PC | parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles | Willowdale | PC | Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. | Nipissing | PC | Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif |
| Hastings, John | Etobicoke-Rexdale | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports |
| Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris | Victoria-Haliburton | PC | Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Hoy, Pat | Essex-Kent | L | |
| Hudak, Tim | Niagara South / -Sud | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Santé |
| Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron | Burlington South / -Sud | PC | Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées) |
| Johns, Helen | Huron | PC | parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Énergie) du ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Johnson, Bert | Perth | PC | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Johnson, Hon / L'hon David | Don Mills | PC | Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Johnson, Ron | Brantford | PC | |

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jordan, W. Leo | Lanark-Renfrew | PC | parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Kells, Morley | Etobicoke-Lakeshore | PC | |
| Kennedy, Gerard | York South / -Sud | L | |
| Klees, Frank | York-Mackenzie | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Kormos, Peter | Welland-Thorold | ND | |
| Kwinter, Monte | Wilson Heights | L | |
| Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell | L | |
| Lankin, Frances | Beaches-Woodbine | ND | chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Laughren, Floyd | Nickel Belt | ND | |
| Leach, Hon / L'hon Al | St George-St David | PC | Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Leadston, Gary L. | Kitchener-Wilmot | PC | assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement |
| Marchese, Rosario | Fort York | ND | |
| Marland, Margaret | Mississauga South / -Sud | PC | |
| Martel, Shelley | Sudbury East / -Est | ND | |
| Martin, Tony | Sault Ste Marie | ND | deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Martiniuk, Gerry | Cambridge | PC | |
| Maves, Bart | Niagara Falls | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail |
| McGuinty, Dalton | Ottawa South / -Sud | L | Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition |
| McLean, Allan K. | Simcoe East / -Est | PC | |
| McLeod, Lyn | Fort William | L | |
| Miclash, Frank | Kenora | L | deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition |
| Morin, Gilles E. | Carleton East / -Est | L | Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Munro, Julia | Durham-York | PC | |
| Murdoch, Bill | Grey-Owen Sound | PC | |
| Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn | Scarborough-Ellesmere | PC | Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Newman, Dan | Scarborough Centre / -Centre | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Santé |
| North, Peter | Elgin | Ind | |
| O'Toole, John R. | Durham East / -Est | PC | |
| Ouellette, Jerry J. | Oshawa | PC | |
| Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al | York Centre / -Centre | PC | Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports |
| Parker, John L. | York East / -Est | PC | parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Patten, Richard | Ottawa Centre / -Centre | L | |
| Pettit, Trevor | Hamilton Mountain | PC | |
| Phillips, Gerry | Scarborough-Agincourt | L | |
| Pouliot, Gilles | Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon | ND | |
| Preston, Peter L. | Brant-Haldimand | PC | |
| Pupatello, Sandra | Windsor-Sandwich | L | |
| Ramsay, David | Timiskaming | L | |
| Rollins, E.J. Douglas | Quinte | PC | |
| Ross, Lillian | Hamilton West / -Ouest | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. | Leeds-Grenville | PC | Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels |

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ruprecht, Tony | Parkdale | L | |
| Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob | Mississauga West / -Ouest | PC | Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation) |
| Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William | Eglinton | PC | Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Sergio, Mario | Yorkview | L | |
| Shea, Derwyn | High Park-Swansea | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Sheehan, Frank | Lincoln | PC | |
| Silipo, Tony | Dovercourt | ND | deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Skarica, Toni | Wentworth North / -Nord | PC | |
| Smith, Bruce | Middlesex | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John | Mississauga North / -Nord | PC | Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Spina, Joseph | Brampton North / -Nord | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. | Carleton | PC | Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Stewart, R. Gary | Peterborough | PC | assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement |
| Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris | Etobicoke West / -Ouest | PC | Speaker / Président |
| Tascona, Joseph N. | Simcoe Centre / -Centre | PC | |
| Tilson, David | Dufferin-Peel | PC | |
| Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. | Markham | PC | Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Turnbull, David | York Mills | PC | chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement |
| Vankoughnet, Bill | Frontenac-Addington | PC | |
| Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble | S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est | PC | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones |
| Wettlaufer, Wayne | Kitchener | PC | |
| Wildman, Bud | Algoma | ND | New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim | Simcoe West / -Ouest | PC | Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé |
| Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth | Waterloo North / -Nord | PC | Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail |
| Wood, Bob | London South / -Sud | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général |
| Wood, Len | Cochrane North / -Nord | ND | |
| Young, Terence H. | Halton Centre / -Centre | PC | |
| Vacant | Oriole | | |
| Vacant | Ottawa West / -Ouest | | |
| Vacant | Windsor-Riverside | | |

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

# CONTENTS

## Monday 18 August 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Indian Independence Day**
Mr Phillips ..... 11287
**South Asian community**
Ms Churley ..... 11287
**Little League baseball championship**
Mr Shea ..... 11287
**Tom Davies**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11288
**Workers' Compensation**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11288
**Bertha Moore and Henry Price**
Mr Ouellette ..... 11288
**Hospital restructuring**
Mr Patten ..... 11288
**Bail supervision program**
Ms Martel ..... 11289
**Health care in Niagara region**
Mr Froese ..... 11289

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Legislative program**
Mr Harris ..... 11289
Hon David Johnson ..... 11291
Mr McGuinty ..... 11292
Mr Hampton ..... 11293
**Ontario Hydro**
Mr Sterling ..... 11291
Mr Conway ..... 11292

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hospital restructuring**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11294
Mr Harris ..... 11294
**Ontario Hydro**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11294
Mr Harris ..... 11295, 11296
Mr Sterling ..... 11295
Mr Hampton ..... 11295
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Hampton ..... 11296
Mr Harris ..... 11297, 11298
Mr Harnick ..... 11297
Mr Phillips ..... 11297
**Labour legislation**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11298
Mr Harris ..... 11298
**Social assistance**
Mr Hudak ..... 11298
Mrs Ecker ..... 11299
**Hospital restructuring**
Mr Kennedy ..... 11299
Mr Wilson ..... 11299
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11300
Mr Runciman ..... 11300
Ms Churley ..... 11300
Mr Agostino ..... 11301
Mr Sterling ..... 11301
**Ministry of Transportation contracts**
Mr Palladini ..... 11301
Mr Hampton ..... 11301
**Property taxation**
Ms Martel ..... 11301
Mr Hodgson ..... 11302
**Drinking and driving**
Mrs Marland ..... 11302
Mr Palladini ..... 11302

### MOTIONS

**Private members' public business**
David Johnson ..... 11303
Agreed to ..... 11303

### PETITIONS

**Women's College Hospital**
Mr Kennedy ..... 11303
Mrs Boyd ..... 11304
Ms Bassett ..... 11304
Mr Martin ..... 11305
Ms Martel ..... 11305
**Pay equity**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11303
**Court ruling**
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11304
Mr Ouellette ..... 11305
**Kidney dialysis**
Mr Cleary ..... 11304
Public libraries
Mr Gravelle ..... 11304
**Standing orders reform**
Mr Bradley ..... 11305
**Casino gambling**
Mr Grimmett ..... 11306
**TVOntario**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11306
**Occupational health and safety**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11306
**Rent regulation**
Mr Stewart ..... 11306

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

**Standing committee on the Legislative Assembly**
Report presented ..... 11307
Mr Tascona ..... 11307

### FIRST READINGS

**United Empire Loyalists' Day Act, 1997,** Bill 150, *Mr Danford*
Agreed to ..... 11307
Mr Danford ..... 11307

### SECOND READINGS

**Supply Act, 1997**
Bill 143, *Mr Eves*
Ms Bassett ..... 11307, 11309
Mr Bradley ..... 11307
Mr Bisson ..... 11308
Mr O'Toole ..... 11308
Mr Gerretsen ..... 11308
Mr Phillips ..... 11309
Mrs Pupatello ..... 11312
Mr Pouliot ..... 11314
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11320

### ROYAL ASSENT

The Administrator of Ontario ..... 11289

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Notice of dissatisfaction**
Mr Agostino ..... 11303


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Lundi 18 août 1997


### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur le jour des Loyalistes de l'Empire-Uni,**
projet de loi 150, ..... *M. Danford*
Adoptée ..... 11307

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de crédits de 1997,**
projet de loi 143, *M. Eves*
Débat présumé ajournée ..... 11320

CA20N1
XM
-1997

Government
Publications

No. 215

Nº 215

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Tuesday 19 August 1997**

**Mardi 19 août 1997**

Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Présidente
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 19 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 19 août 1997

*The House met at 1331.*
*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ERUPTION IN MONTSERRAT

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** In Montserrat, a tiny island in the West Indies, residents have been hit with a natural catastrophe that has devastated two thirds of the island's surface. The Soufriere Hills volcano that had been dormant for 400 years erupted in 1995 and forced the islanders to move to the north end of their nation.

On June 25 of this year, the volcano erupted again, killing 19 people to date, destroying five villages and over 80% of the homes on the island. Currently, the only access to the island is by ferry or helicopter. Before the disaster, Montserrat's population was 13,000 and now, of the remaining 4,000 residents, half are preparing to leave.

Yesterday afternoon, reports of earthquakes around the volcano were reported, increasing the seriousness of the evacuation efforts. Many of those left on the island are in schools, churches and shelters in the north of the island. Twenty-one Canadian citizens are registered with Canada's high commission in Barbados and are expected to evacuate. In Toronto, about 30 people visiting from Montserrat have been stranded here and hope to have their visits extended by the federal government and possibly allowed to work and their children attend school here.

The Montserrat expatriates in Toronto have been very supportive in assisting with fund-raising relief efforts and community support. A fund has been established for relief funds and donations can be made at any Canada Trust branch to the Montserrat disaster relief fund. The Montserrat Association of Toronto has been working very hard during this difficult time, and I commend them for their perseverance.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the Montserratians, and I am appealing to the members of this assembly and the people of Ontario to provide whatever assistance we can.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** This government, this Minister of Transportation, seems intent on downloading, on dumping the maintenance bill for more than 1,700 kilometres of provincial highways. Who will pay? The municipal taxpayers, through their property taxes, a sort of levy, a sort of user fee, because municipalities will have no other choice.

The town of Geraldton in the great riding of Lake Nipigon has been asked to take over 12.2 kilometres of Highway 584. Keep in mind that there has been no upgrading of Highway 584 since 1980. Simply put, the people of Geraldton cannot afford this added responsibility. The minister knows that, but he has been unable to convince his colleagues that this sort of buck-passing, this sort of downloading, this sort of added responsibility does indeed place an unfair burden on local residents in Marathon, in Nipigon, in Manitouwadge and today in Geraldton.

Shame on the minister. It's time to reconsider. Put the cheque in the envelope when you download responsibilities.

### INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** August 15, 1997, marked the golden jubilee of the independence of India, the world's oldest continuous civilization, whose beginnings date back to the third millennium before the common era.

A subcontinent ruled by majestic emperors and possessing a highly developed culture, India's great historic figures include Mahavira of the Jains, Gautama Buddha, Sankara the Hindu philosopher, the Sikh guru Nanak, and later thinkers and reforms such as Dayananda, Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who captured the imagination of India and the world with his non-violent approach to liberation, who led his people to independence as a sovereign nation in 1947.

All Canadians are truly proud to have in India an ally and good friend, just as we are proud of the many contributions to Canada and Ontario that Canadians of Indian background have made and continue to make.

About 350,000 people make up the Indo-Canadian community in this province. Over the years, they have become a powerful social, cultural and economic force. They have contributed immeasurably to Ontario's vibrant growth and prosperity.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I wish the people of India my warmest and best wishes on Indian Independence Day. May the great historic friendship

between India and Canada continue to deepen and strengthen, and may we always honour the great saint and hero Mahatma Gandhi who, like Moses, led his people to the chosen land of freedom and independence.

## RAINSTORM IN SHUNIAH TOWNSHIP

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** This past July 2, a torrential rainstorm swept through Thunder Bay, causing extraordinary damage to Shuniah township in my riding, including a complete washout of Lakeshore Drive as well as extensive damage to numerous private residences.

A disaster such as this required an immediate response and the municipality's public works department worked around the clock to repair the infrastructure damage. But while the work was done, the cost of rebuilding the roadway has put an exceptional financial burden on the community.

As the local provincial member, I wrote to the ministries of municipal affairs, northern development and transportation, asking for special funding assistance to deal with this unforeseen crisis. So far no assistance has been received. Today I am calling on the Minister of Municipal Affairs, whose ministry has been identified as the one where such assistance may be available, to recognize Shuniah's plight and announce that provincial financial aid will be forthcoming.

This disaster was not the fault of the residents of Shuniah township, nor could the municipality be expected to plan for such a disaster. Provincial funding programs are in place for such circumstances, so I have to ask, why is the minister delaying in responding?

Minister, if you feel Shuniah township must justify their need for special assistance, look no further than the recent downloading of policing costs to Shuniah, as they must now find over $800,000 in new money to deal with that harsh new reality. We should not be begging for your help, Minister. Shuniah township needs and deserves the support.

**1340**

## ONTARIO LOTTERY CORP

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I rise today to share with you and the people of Ontario that my community, the city of Sault Ste Marie, is in mourning these days. We're in mourning over the imminent demise of the Ontario Lottery Corp as one of the foundation blocks of the economy of our region.

As I walk around the community and I hear from people, there's a tremendous sense of shock and disbelief. This is a corporation that is strong and healthy. There's nothing wrong with it and this government has deigned in its wisdom to change it in a way that will see it, for all intents and purposes, removed as one of the foundation blocks of the economy of Sault Ste Marie and Algoma.

I remind the government that the lottery corporation, since its inception, has improved its bottom line every year, including the years since its move to Sault Ste Marie. The lottery corporation was moved to the Sault in the late 1980s and early 1990s to help stabilize the economy of our area and to assist in diversifying the economy, to build on what was there but changing and bringing us into the next century, confident that we can compete in the new economy.

You are not listening to what the people of Ontario are saying, Mr Harris and your government. They want you to fix things that are broke and not break things that are working well. The Ontario Lottery Corp is working well in the best interests of our community. Please leave it alone.

## UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** Yesterday I introduced a private member's bill that, if passed, will proclaim June 19 every year as United Empire Loyalists' Day.

The Loyalists were Canada's first multicultural immigrants who, for various reasons, stood for the unity of the empire during and after the US gained their independence in 1783. The Loyalist influence was the deciding factor in the passage of the Constitutional Act of 1791 that established the framework for Upper Canada's government. This act, also known as the Canada Act, received royal assent on June 19, 1791.

Among the provisions of the Constitutional Act were the creation of elected legislatures for the two new provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, the forerunners of modern Ontario and Quebec. It was the Loyalists who laid the foundations for the future development of Canada as a country with bilingual, multicultural and regional traditions within the unifying context of a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.

The Loyalist influence is clearly seen in our provincial motto, which reads, "Loyal in the beginning, so remaining." I would like to ask all the members to join me in recognizing the historic contributions the Loyalists have made and their descendants continue to make to the development of Ontario by declaring June 19 as United Empire Loyalists' Day.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I rise today in the House to congratulate the Canadian Medical Association because they voted yesterday to reject two-tiered health care in this country. They voted to say that the development of a two-tiered health care system, a private health care system for those who are very wealthy and the rest of us having to queue up for what's left over, is not the Canadian way.

Now that doctors in this country have recognized that this two-tiered, Americanized private health care system

has no place in this country, maybe this government will start to realize it too because what the doctors talked about were the cuts to health care, and who's doing the largest cuts to health but Mike Harris. Mike Harris, the largest cutter of health care, has taken $900 million out of hospitals. Mike Harris has made sure —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Member for York South.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** Mike Harris continues to cut hospitals in a way that is met by no —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for York South. It's simple. When I sit down, it doesn't mean you can start yelling again. It's rather Pavlovian, I agree.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Yes. Not that I would ever have done that. I want to make that clear. Member for York South.

**Mr Kennedy:** The Canadian Medical Association has rejected what the jeering of the government members provides support for, the idea of an Americanized health care system, the one that would shut down the most efficient, the Riversides, the Women's Colleges, the Wellesleys, the best hospitals we have in this province, the only basis being to save money to pay for the tax cut. But these kinds of sneaky manoeuvres are being caught on to by the people of this province.

We want to thank and congratulate the doctors for recognizing how hollow the health policy of this province is and we look for the government members to do likewise.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I would like to advise the Premier, because he just doesn't seem to be getting it, that he is very quickly, apparently with blinkers on, marching us into the abyss in terms of labour chaos in all our communities. The labour movement, the people who represent the women and men who work in our public sector and provide services in our hospitals and schools, firefighters, police officers, virtually every facet of our life, have done everything they can to arrange a simple meeting with Mike Harris so that they can offer up their alternatives to his Bill 136.

Bill 136, if rammed through this House using your new rules to shut down the opposition, will create chaos in all our communities, and at the end of the day it means the quality of life of working people and their families is going to go down to meet your tax cut and your vicious attack on those workers.

Yesterday, twice, Premier Harris, when I asked him, said he would call the office of Gord Wilson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, to arrange such a meeting. To the best of my knowledge, as of half an hour ago, that phone call still hasn't been made. The Premier stands in his place here and elsewhere and says, "Yes, I'll meet," but the phone never rings. Once again, I call on the Premier to honour his commitment, meet with —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

## PETERBOROUGH ECONOMY

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I am pleased to inform all members of this House about a successful speciality electronics firm in my riding that continues to grow and prosper in an ever-growing competitive market.

Bryston Ltd is a Canadian company that has been designing and manufacturing speciality electronics for professional and consumer markets for over 30 years. When Bryston moved its headquarters to Peterborough in 1994, it had 37 employees. Since then, the number has grown to 57, with another five working in the United States.

Bryston has grown by 40% this year, with anticipated growth in the 30% to 40% range each year for the next five years. By the end of next year they are projecting a workforce totalling 80, and 100 by the year 2000. On August 13 they began a large project that will expand its current factory by more than 65% to accommodate future growth.

Bryston has been recognized by the industry's leading publications as a company that is revolutionizing the industry. Bryston is a leader, not a follower. Their vision of the future and their hard work have set Bryston on a course of great prosperity.

Please join me in congratulating president Brian Russell and all the workers at Bryston for their hard work in making this company a great success. Ontario is indeed open for business.

# STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## ONTARIO WORKS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Today I am pleased to update members on the results we have achieved so far due to our welfare reforms and the introduction of Ontario Works, our mandatory workfare program.

During the election campaign, this government promised to build a strong economic climate to create more jobs. Today, Ontario is leading the country in job growth. We are turning the province's economy around. As the Premier noted yesterday, in the last five months alone, we have seen 124,000 jobs created. That is more than 50% of all jobs created in Canada.

During the election campaign, we promised to reform Ontario's welfare system, to get people off the system and back to work. That's because we believe that people are better off working. Most people want to work, and Ontario Works is helping this happen. Today, almost 210,000

people have stopped relying on welfare since this government took office over two years ago. Put another way, that is roughly the population of the city of Windsor. In July alone, over 12,000 people left Ontario's welfare system. We now have the lowest number of people on assistance in Ontario since January 1992. These numbers show that this government's reforms are producing results.

**1350**

To date, 36 communities are implementing Ontario Works and more than 36,000 people have participated in one or more of the program's mandatory activities. We have received 71% of the municipalities' business plans and by next year Ontario Works will be implemented across the province.

Communities are finding creative ways to ensure the best possible range of employment supports for participants in Ontario Works. For example, several municipalities are integrating their resource centres with existing federal employment centres. As a result, the participants in places such as Cornwall, Timmins and Orangeville will benefit from a broader range of employment services at one site.

Community agencies are also responding by creating placements that give participants a chance to apply their existing skills and to develop new ones. This is helping community agencies undertake much-needed projects that they have been unable to do in the past. At the same time, participants are given an opportunity to give something back to their communities.

In communities all across this province, people know that it is better to be working than on welfare. Up north, in places such as Dryden, Ignace, Sioux Lookout, Pickle Lake, they are working together to set up self-help employment resource centres where none existed before. This will help others access the tools they require to get a job.

In other locations, some recipients are doing their placements right at the Ontario Works resource centres. Here participants have been gaining skills in dealing with the public, in using technology, and important firsthand access to a network of job opportunities. As more than half of the participants from Muskoka have found, this valuable experience has led directly to paid employment. In Kitchener-Waterloo, there is more good news. One employment agency alone has already helped close to 130 people get off welfare and into paid employment.

People are telling us that their community placements are making a difference in their lives. They feel the satisfaction of contributing to their community. In Cornwall, one participant helped organize Worldfest's International Celebration of Song and Dance. The experience and contacts she gained led to part-time employment after the event. In Hamilton, seven participants helped a community centre stage a festival in a downtown park. They helped promote awareness of the event, they sought corporate sponsorships, they set up the event, and they worked in the festival.

In Burlington today, I met participants at a reuse centre where they help the community recycle household goods that would have otherwise ended up in landfill sites. The list could go on and on.

I have heard from people on welfare that these activities have led to a renewed sense of self-confidence and self-respect, but most important, they have found something that has been missing for a long time, and that is hope. It is this hope, coupled with a desire to better their lives and the lives of their children, that is making Ontario Works a success.

We believe that giving people the support, the tools and the encouragement to return to productive lives is essential. So far, we are pleased with the progress, but we know we must do more to assist more people to become self-sufficient. We are encouraged that more people are moving towards self-sufficiency as Ontario's economy improves, and we are encouraged that this decline in the caseloads and our other welfare reforms have resulted in savings of more than $1 billion for Ontario taxpayers. As a government, we owe it to people on social assistance to provide them with opportunities to become self-sufficient. Equally, we owe it to taxpayers to ensure that the dollars are going to help those truly in need.

Later today we are scheduled to debate Bill 142, the Social Assistance Reform Act. It will strengthen our ability to provide people with opportunities to become self-sufficient, because we need to prepare people for a growing economy and an expanding workforce. That is what Ontario Works is all about: a mandatory program designed to help people on welfare acquire necessary skills, make contributions to their communities and get back into the workforce.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** If we were to use the Conservative government's workfare as the example of success and this were a business, you'd all be out of work tomorrow. In Ontario we have over 750 communities. After two years of governing, you have found 36 communities to participate in your program. I would consider that an abysmal failure. It begs us to remember the FSP and the abysmal failure that was when we talk about this government changing the way they do business. I think you're throwing it all out the window.

Let me say at the outset that today we are debating this bill the minister has brought forward, and still today I expected to see regulation so we could have some very meaningful debate. Why is the minister not bringing forward information like, what is the definition of "disability"? What will it mean for people who won't be able to access the system because you've raised the bar so high and cut off people who are truly disabled? That's what we thought we were going to hear today in this minister's statement. We saw nothing but a whitewash, and I believe that whitewash will continue right through the debating this afternoon and onward.

This government used one of the models in the United States, and that was the Wisconsin model of workfare. Today the bureaucrats in Wisconsin have finally admitted

publicly that their program was an absolute failure. The people in Wisconsin said that city shelters are taking in 25% more people, food bank visits are up and soup kitchen visits are up. It's an embarrassment for state officials, all the more so because government ineptitude is partly to blame. When people called for help, they found case workers retired, transferred or swamped. They admitted this may not be the best time to streamline staff.

Guess what the Ontario government is doing under Mike Harris: streamlining government, getting rid of staff people. Those who remain are completely overrun. They don't have the technology in place to bring in this kind of change, and it too will be bungled. It will be bungled just like the family support program was, and that will be to the demise of whom? It will be to the demise of children in Ontario, the very group this minister claims to be supporting.

Let us remember that the people most affected will be the same people who won't have a voice at the polls in the next election. Children will be affected by this. The minister has done nothing to fix the issue of child care. In Metro Toronto alone you have 8,000 people waiting for spaces. When they get their 8,000 spaces, they will be able to go out and find work.

This government needs to understand that every time they go down in the polls, they talk about workfare because they believe they will go back to that populist mantra and the whole world will watch what they're doing and think it's just wonderful. There are children in Ontario who will suffer because of what you are bringing in today, Minister.

This is not a good day to throw out the minister. I am interested in what she has to say to be responsible for the people who need government support the most.

**1400**

I think all of us in this House have to recognize this one fact: There is an inverse relationship between employment levels and welfare rolls. The sooner we all understand this very basic inverse relationship, the better. When people are working, the welfare rolls are down. It becomes the Ontario government's responsibility to make work for these people —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, folks. Order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I would say to the member for Hamilton East it's a bit of a stretch for you to accuse the minister of provoking you because she's heckling. It happens in here; it heckles. I think we just have to try and maintain some decorum to get to question period. And I ask the government members to come to order, please. This is the response period of time. They're allowed to make their response.

**Mrs Pupatello:** It's very frightening to think this minister is responsible for children in Ontario with this kind of behaviour displayed today.

The mere fact that 36 communities have been forced into participation begs the question of how she also expects every community in Ontario to be involved in this program when the response initially was absolutely abysmal. It's because they will be forced to play the political game or receive absolutely no funding.

That is why no minister has yet outlined the requirements for all municipalities in Ontario to receive this special grant you're supposed to be giving them. You will hook them in and force them to participate even though every expert who deals with people on assistance understands that this program will not work. It didn't work in the 1930s. It sent cities into bankruptcy.

I am asking every municipality to have a very close look at the increased costs that will be associated with this bill because they will not have the funding to support it.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I have a sense, after yesterday hearing statements from ministers and the statement from the minister today, that we're all going to be treated to a spate of these feel-good, "Everything is rosy out there," announcements from ministers that really have a lot of fluff and not a lot of content. I'm disappointed with the minister's statement today because I think it falls in that category: not a lot of substance.

I've been trying to understand, when a government that is so dedicated to its view of change and the zealous approach it put forward, why things aren't changing out there in a way that is actually making things better for people, in this case people on social assistance. In the zeal to restructure, in the zeal to cut back, in the zeal to pull government out of communities, which is an almost biblical belief on the part of this government, they have moved so fast that they haven't taken into consideration a lot of unintended results. Let me give you some examples.

The minister talks about all these people getting out there into jobs. You cut support for programs for youth employment and as a result there are 100,000 more young workers without jobs. Your workfare is not helping them. They don't have jobs. They did have jobs; they don't now. What does that mean?

We've seen growing numbers of documentaries about kids living on streets who are not going to be eligible under your workfare-welfare reforms for social assistance. They're out there working as squeegee car cleaners without places to live. This is a growing crisis. Minister, your announcements here on workfare don't help those people.

You talk about 88,000 fewer children being on welfare. Minister, there are more children than ever before in the history of Ontario living in shelters, living in abject poverty. Families in shelters aren't entitled to welfare. Some of those numbers you're boasting about are families with kids in poverty who have moved into wee rooms in motels, whole families living together in shelters. That is a crisis your announcement does nothing about.

You talk about the effectiveness of workfare. We have a quote from just this past week from the director of Essex

county, who told the press that Ontario Works is nothing more than what they're doing already except that it's mandatory. Show me where the progress is, Minister.

Let me give you a real example of the unintended consequences when you don't think things through. For example, in North Bay there was an organization that was doing placements, that was doing counselling. People were working there doing that job. You cut their grant, that organization is gone, and now workfare participants are doing it. You took away real jobs and now people who are on welfare are doing that through a workfare program.

You say people are getting new skills. Let me give you an example of when you don't think through the unintended consequences. In Algoma the new skills people are getting is painting picnic tables. I don't know how far that's going to take them in the new expending job force in the new changing world you referred to in your statement.

You talk about people gaining self-confidence, and I support that and I hope parts of the program will do that, but there were programs that were doing that. I worked through community economic development, Jobs Ontario Community Action, to establish a program like the Good Food Box, where welfare recipients were working and getting self-confidence and gaining skills. You cancelled that, but you're bringing it back through another door and I hope some of those same things will happen.

The shell game in this, the speed with which you move through your cuts, the speed with which you move through your downsizing and restructuring, the unintended consequences are hurting people in this province. This fluffy statement today without substance doesn't change that reality.

Your Bill 142 that we're going to discuss this afternoon really doesn't have a lot of content beyond giving welfare workers more powers, like police, giving them powers to put liens on people's homes. It really is akin to the Quebec Boubou macoutes. People remember those changes, where you turn welfare into a police-enforced situation, and that is not going to help people get back to work.

I guess what I want to say is that we agree change is needed. Change is needed, but it doesn't have to be this way. Your government has stopped listening to people in Ontario. If you would listen to people, if you would work with people, if you would slow down enough to try and get it right, maybe you could make positive change and the unintended consequences wouldn't be hurting kids, families and youth the way they are.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Just before question period, I'd like to make an introduction of guests.

I'd like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today the Honourable G.H.S. Mdhlalose, Speaker of the Kwazulu-Natal Legislature in South Africa. Welcome.

I would like to draw members' attention to the presence at the table of Geof Mitchell, Clerk of the House of Assembly of South Australia. Mr Mitchell will be joining our table for the remainder of this week to observe our proceedings.

I'm sure I speak for all members, Geof, we welcome you and best of luck.

# ORAL QUESTIONS

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. A few days ago the lid blew off Ontario Hydro and there was obviously tremendous concern at the time. You provided us with some solemn assurances, first, that there was no danger, and second, that notwithstanding that we could be looking at up to as much as $8 billion in costs to repair nuclear generators, Ontario Hydro ratepayers would not be faced with any rate increases.

I heard earlier today that you, in the course of a scrum, offered that you are now considering rate increases. Would you please tell me that I did not hear properly and that you continue to provide us with every assurance that Ontario Hydro ratepayers are not about to experience any kind of a rate increase.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** You did not hear properly. We are not planning any rate increases.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I want to come back to this; it's not that easy. This morning there was some discussion about rate increases. You said something to the effect that perhaps it'll be on an average of 5% up or down; that you might consider, for purposes of encouraging conservation, charging more at peak hours and charging less at off-peak hours. Did you or did you not talk about that today in this morning's scrum? Our friends in the media are anxious to speak with you again, according to how you answer this.

**1410**

**Hon Mr Sterling:** The first question the media asked me was whether we were planning any rate increases. I said no. I said that the legislative committee, in considering conservation matters, may want to discuss differential rates to encourage conservation of electricity. But this government will not break its promise with regard to a five-year rate freeze for our customers, our residents, our businesses.

**Mr McGuinty:** There are over three million residential ratepayers in Ontario. They trusted you when they read this Common Sense Revolution. They read in there specifically that a five-year freeze will be placed on hydro rates to give consumers, employers and industries guaranteed stability in planning their budgets. They know that coming this January they're looking at property tax increases as a result of their downloading. What they want to know today — what they want is your assurance that there is no way that their rates are going to increase as a

result of what has happened at Ontario Hydro; and furthermore, regardless of that, that they have this minister's assurance, in keeping with the promise contained in the Common Sense Revolution, that hydro rates are not going up for the next five years, no ifs, ands or buts. Do they have that assurance?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** You have our assurance from before. The assurance stays the same. We are not changing that assurance. We have made the promise. We keep our promises.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** In the absence of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I'll direct my question to the Deputy Premier of the government that keeps all its promises.

We are receiving conflicting information now on a daily basis. We have every solemn assurance from this government that downloading will not produce any increase in property taxes. On the other hand, we hear from our elected mayors and municipal officials that property taxes are going up.

The latest is from the mayor of North Bay. This is the Premier's mayor. He's telling us that municipal taxes are going to go up 75% as a direct result of downloading. The people of North Bay are wondering, who should they believe? Should they believe the Premier, the man who said he wouldn't close any hospitals, the man who said he wouldn't make cuts to education, the man who said he wouldn't increase user fees or makes cuts to agriculture or the environment? Should they believe the Premier or should they believe their mayor?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I would say to the leader of the official opposition that the provincial government, as he well knows, has accepted a proposal put forward by municipalities in the province of Ontario.

**Interjection:** You put the proposal forward.

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, no. You're exactly wrong. You are absolutely wrong. Perhaps certain members have lost their memory over the few short weeks we've been away from this place. There is no doubt that the provincial government put forward a Who Does What proposal. There also is no doubt that the municipalities in the province of Ontario, a group led by Mr Mundell, responded by putting forward a counterproposal to the province, which the province accepted.

We have accepted the municipalities' proposal to delineate responsibilities. We have said from day one and municipalities knew that the municipal support grant of some $667 million was going to be phased out. We told them that. They've acknowledged that. They've known that for a long period of time.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, the people of this province are confused and they want your help in this matter. They're wondering whether they should believe their municipally elected officials or the Premier of the province. Just yesterday the mayor of Hamilton told us that he's completed his numbers, completed his review of the impact of downloading, and he says taxes are going to go up at the municipal level by $60 million; that works out to roughly $250 per household.

Niagara region today announced that their 12 municipalities are looking at a $42-million increase, and that means they're looking at, on average, a $200 increase per household.

You're telling us that it's not going up. The mayors out there, the elected officials at the municipal level, many of them Tories, are telling us that they are going up. I want you to tell us why we should believe you and your government.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Perhaps the leader of the official opposition would like to listen to the former member for Ottawa West. "Chiarelli said the downloaded responsibilities can be absorbed and said the region's estimate of $82 million in new costs is inflated."

I didn't hear the leader of the official opposition criticize Mr Chiarelli when he was sitting here as his colleague. Why won't you take his advice? They're not going up in Ottawa. There's no reason for them to go up. Throughout the province of Ontario, municipalities can find a 2% efficiency.

**Mr McGuinty:** This minister and this government have a serious credibility problem. You promised that you wouldn't close hospitals — that's what this was all about — you wouldn't make cuts to classrooms, you wouldn't make cuts to agriculture, you wouldn't make cuts to environment, you wouldn't introduce user fees, and you especially wouldn't introduce them on the backs of our seniors. Now you're telling us that property taxes aren't going up. I ask you once again, why, why, why should the people of this province believe you?

**Hon Mr Eves:** Coming from a party that introduced 33 tax increases in five years, it's almost ridiculous that he —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Municipalities should easily be able to find 2%, two cents out of every dollar they spend, in efficiencies. If they can do that, there is absolutely no reason whatsoever why real property taxes should go up in municipalities.

Mel Lastman doesn't think this is a problem. Mel Lastman says: "I can come up with a 0% tax increase. There's no doubt in my mind that it can be done for the new city of Toronto." As I recall, one of the leader of the official opposition's colleagues is the co-chair of Mel Lastman's campaign.

**1420**

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, lawyers for the family of Dudley George issued notices of examination to the

Premier and the Attorney General, requiring them to appear for questioning under oath in the civil lawsuit on the wrongful death of Dudley George.

Deputy Premier, to my knowledge, this is the first time a Premier has ever been subpoenaed to appear in such a very serious matter. You must have received your legal advice last night from your lawyers on whether you will try to obtain a judicial order that would get the Premier and the Attorney General out of testifying.

Can you tell us now, will the Premier appear at the hearing and answer questions put to him concerning the wrongful death of Dudley George? If your government has nothing to hide about your involvement in the death of Dudley George and the Ipperwash affair, then let the Premier go to the hearing and answer the questions.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I'm sure the leader of the third party is aware that this matter is before the civil courts. I certainly don't have any indication of what the Premier's personal decision will be. I would assume that counsel for either side or all parties in a civil lawsuit will iron out these matters.

**Mr Hampton:** I thought it was a rather simple question, and I hope the Deputy Premier can come up with a more definitive answer. We spoke with the lawyers who represent the George family, and from their perspective the facts are clear: In the past, the OPP always took the approach of trying to avoid confrontation at protests like the one at Ipperwash, and from their perspective it was because of the direction of the Premier via his executive assistant, Deb Hutton, to have the occupiers removed from the park, nothing else, that the OPP suddenly changed their long-standing role of communicating with the protesters.

What you did is you took away the non-confrontational tools that the OPP had at their disposal and you said very directly to them, "Get the natives out of the park."

I put it to you again, Deputy Premier, will the Premier appear at the hearing to answer the questions?

**Hon Mr Eves:** With respect to the exact question the honourable member asks, I certainly have no knowledge of the Premier's personal intentions. However, I will comment on the preamble to his question.

He's very well aware of the minutes of a meeting of the interministerial committee on September 6, 1995. He's also very much aware of the three ministerial directives that came out of that meeting.

They are: from the Ministry of Natural Resources, "The minister wants to act as quickly as possible to avoid further damage and to curtail any escalation of the situation"; from the Ministry of the Attorney General, "The minister agrees that application will be made for an injunction"; from the Solicitor General's ministry, "As a matter of protocol, the Solicitor General's office does not involve itself in the day-to-day operations of the OPP. The OPP will exercise its discretion regarding how to proceed in removing the Stony Pointers from the park and laying appropriate charges."

**Mr Hampton:** I think the quotations the Deputy Premier has read into the record add a little further to this. You see, nowhere does it say in the directives from the Solicitor General that the OPP should consider whether to remove the protesters out of the park. It doesn't say that. That's the problem. The Premier has given the direction: "Get the natives out of the park." That was the direction from the Premier through his executive assistant. The ministerial work that follows from there is all on the premise, "Get the natives out of the park."

What the Solicitor General did was leave it up to the OPP on how to get the natives out of the park, but you've taken all the other options away. You said, "No discussion." Even in terms of an injunction, you did not allow for discussion. It was hardball all the way. That was a specific change in the OPP approach. They had never taken that approach before; only on the direction of your government.

Will the Premier attend and answer the questions —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Leader of the third party, please come to order.

**Hon Mr Eves:** As I've said and I say again, the Premier will make his own personal decision as to what he does with respect to a particular civil lawsuit.

I would like to further add to the last preamble that the honourable member made. I'm not going to try to interpret the words of an individual, the observations that they made of what somebody else supposedly said or didn't say over two years ago. I think the ministerial directives coming out of that meeting speak for themselves. The OPP certainly acted on their own. They were given no direction, either by the Solicitor General or by anybody else, as to how they should proceed. That's the end of the matter.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I would say to the Deputy Premier, there's a way to answer all these questions: Hold a public inquiry. Let's get all the information out.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** To the Minister of Environment, speaking of getting the information out, I have a copy of the press scrum and the comments made by the environment minister today. He said in that scrum very clearly, "higher rates during peak periods and higher rates for the larger amount of electricity you use."

You and Bill Farlinger have been telling people there won't be higher electricity rates, but today you talk about higher electricity rates in peak periods. Which is it? Can you tell all those hardworking people across Ontario who would have to pay those higher rates during peak periods that it won't happen?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** In the scrum this morning, reporters were asking about a number of different issues. One of them was the kinds of policies that could be implemented to

encourage conservation, and one of them related to a differential rate classification system. I said that the committee would probably want to discuss that. I said to them also that that was a hypothetical, that it was not under consideration by this government of Ontario and that we intended to stick by our promise.

**1430**

**Mr Hampton:** I marvel at your ability to say one thing one day, then to say something else in a press scrum and then to try to change your tune again. Let me put it to this minister this way. In this press scrum you also talk about averages, so I want to pin the minister down. I want to be very clear.

If you're talking about changing the rate package, if you're talking about charging more during peak periods, then the people who will have to pay that are all those hardworking Ontarians who don't have a choice about what time they go to work each day. They don't have a choice about not turning on the electricity at 7 or 7:30 in the morning. They have to get up and they have to be at work at a certain time. They have to have their children off to school at a certain time.

Can you categorically guarantee that you will not be changing the rate structure, so that all those hardworking people don't have to pay more during the periods of the day when they must use electrical power?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I have said before, and I'll say it again, we made a promise and we intend to keep that promise. We will not raise hydro rates by some 15% to 25% as was the case during your government's reign.

**Mr Hampton:** I note that the minister didn't answer my question. The question was this, and I'll put it to you again: If you're talking about raising peak rates, there are all kinds of people in this province who have no choice about when they get up in the morning, when they have to go to work, when they have to use electricity. If you're going to try to raise more revenue off the peak rates, that's going to affect all of those millions of people across this province.

That's the question I put to you, and that's the question you have steadfastly tried to avoid, so I put it to you again: Will you guarantee that you will not try to raise more money through peak rates? Will you guarantee that you will not go after all those millions of hardworking Ontarians who have to get up and go to work every day by attacking their power rate when they must use power? Will you guarantee that?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We have made a promise. We intend to keep that promise in terms of what we have said before in the Common Sense Revolution and subsequent statements as to hydro rates in this province. The discussion this morning dealt with what the committee might deal with in terms of conservation measures. There is no intention on the part of this government to consider a rate increase at this time or in the future.

## HOME CARE

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Health. I want to raise a question on behalf of a very young constituent of mine, Sarah Hanrahan. She's 28 months. She has lived all of her short life at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. She suffers from muscular dystrophy. She is tube fed and wheelchair bound.

The doctors have made a decision now that it's time for her to leave the hospital. She is to go home with her mother. The problem is that her mother also has muscular dystrophy. There is another child at home who is perfectly healthy and the mother has no difficulty whatsoever looking after that healthy child, but she has some very serious problems just anticipating how she is going to be able to care for young Sarah.

There is a waiting list for home care in the Ottawa area. They do not have the necessary hours to meet this mother's need. She is going to be discharged this Friday and sent home to her mother because they need the beds at hospital. I'm wondering what assurance you can provide us, Minister, and what assurance you can provide to Sarah's mother.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I'm very much aware of the disease muscular dystrophy, as it runs in my own family. I too had a cousin who was eight years a resident of Etobicoke General Hospital and passed away recently.

The fact of the matter is, though, that the rules in this province are very clear regardless of what government is in power. Patients are not allowed to be discharged from hospital until a full care plan is in place. I know that the hospital and the doctors in this case will make sure that a full care plan is in place or else people are not to be discharged from hospital.

Second, with respect to home care, we do not have waiting lists for home care in this province. We've cleared those up. I will doublecheck the Ottawa one. I check them every Monday. We checked yesterday. For in-home nursing — that's one of the things this government is very proud of — we do have some waiting lists for occupational therapy and physiotherapy, but that's because we don't have the therapists. We need more young people to go into those professions.

With respect to this particular case, though, the patient may need more hours — that is, I think, the point you're making — than are regularly available with home care, and certainly we will do everything we can to accommodate that.

**Mr McGuinty:** Sarah is going to be discharged this Friday. In an effort to fulfil their responsibilities under the child welfare act, the doctors have notified the children's aid society that this little girl is going to be discharged, and they are recommending that the children's aid society inquire into this and that they look at foster care.

What we have in your Ontario is a little girl, 28 months of age, who is about to be discharged from the hospital.

She is going to fall through the cracks. She has got a mother at home who cares for her deeply, who wants to bring her into the house. There is no home care available. There is no better person to care for the child than that mother. She is going to end up in foster care because she has fallen through the cracks in your Ontario.

What I want from you, Minister, is your assurance right now that this is not going to happen and that you are going to ensure that the necessary funding is there or you are going to do whatever it takes to ensure that Sarah can go home to her mother, where she properly belongs, and that her mother will have all the assistance she needs to keep her little girl at home.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** We've just doublechecked, during the time it took to answer the question, with Ottawa, and there are no waiting lists for home care in Ottawa. We will of course, as we do with every case that comes to our attention, do everything humanly possible to help this family. We will exercise our responsibilities, as I know the hospital will. People are not allowed to be discharged from hospital without a full care plan in place. Every time we look at these cases, we find that plans are being developed. We will make sure a full care plan is in place for this young person.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is also of the Minister of Health. Minister, you're probably well aware of the real needs of the urban population when it comes to health care, but you've done nothing to ensure that the needs of those in densely urban populations are being taken account of when your commission plays its number games and sets savings targets and population-to-bed ratios.

I'm talking particularly of course about our neighbour the Wellesley Central Hospital, which serves the most densely populated area in the province. It has a very high concentration of the poorest people in our province, a high concentration of seniors and a high concentration of people who are very vulnerable to diseases such as HIV infection, tuberculosis and many of the other ills of those who do not have supports within our communities.

Minister, are you prepared today to tell us that you're going to finally pay attention to the needs of the urban population and intervene in the order to close Wellesley Central Hospital?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The benchmarks the commission is using were set by the previous government, the member's government, in 1992, when you outlined a complete plan for urban health care. We've adopted that and we've modified that, and the commission has been working in that framework.

I remind the honourable member that there are significant benefits. First of all, nobody spends more per person on AIDS than this government. We spend $55.9 million on HIV and AIDS. That's $15.7 million more than the federal government spends on its entire national AIDS strategy for all of Canada. Recently, Dr Anne Phillips, whom you appointed to the head of Ontario's AIDS advisory committee, told me, after doing a North American research project on drug plans, that we have the best drug plan in North America for people suffering with HIV and AIDS, and the list goes on and on.

**1440**

I remind the honourable member that restructuring will ensure that programs for HIV and AIDS currently located in one location will perhaps move, depending on the outcome of the court case, a matter that's before the court now, but everything will move. All of the programs will be in place and there will be more money available because of restructuring —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**Mrs Boyd:** My question was not about AIDS support. You're quite right. Our government did put those supports in for AIDS people and we're grateful this is one area you have not cut.

The question was about your intervention in the orders of your hospital commission in the case of a high-need urban health program offered by a community-based hospital. You try to perpetuate the myth that you are not politically involved. All of us watched you stop the process in Lambton county to ensure there was a rural health program in place. We watched you dance around the whole constitutional issue with respect to Montfort. We're not saying those were bad decisions; we're saying we know you can intervene when it's important.

What the people in dense urban populations who need specific care are asking is that you intervene in this case. Will you intervene and set up an urban health program that pays attention to the special needs of people in those areas?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** First of all, I have never intervened in any case whatsoever before the commission. You can make up all the theories you want, but history will show this government took the politics out of health care and put it in the hands of the experts.

With respect to an urban health policy, I just want to know what the honourable member is opposed to in Metro Toronto when the urban health policy as established by the Health Services Restructuring Commission calls for 5,207 more nursing home beds badly needed; 4,181 long-term-care community spaces, including in-home nursing and community therapies; five new MRI machines for Metro; the creation of a women's health council, which the Deputy Premier and finance minister announced $10 million for, the first of its kind in North America.

Five times more than is currently spent on women's health research is going to be spent by this government so that women and women's health issues will be the focus of all our health care system and not just one part of downtown Toronto; a Metro-wide rehabilitation system, a coordinated system for children and children's services. Those are the —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Health, come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Those are the benefits of restructuring. In Metro Toronto those beds are badly needed.

**The Speaker:** Minister of Health, can you please come to order. I don't want to warn you again, Minister of Health.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. Recently, as you'll know and as everyone in this House will know, Hamilton experienced a disastrous fire, one of the worst fires in the history of the province.

Immediately after the fire occurred, residents had some samples taken by the MOE, and I must commend the staff for their fast action in conducting those tests. As a result of the samples that were taken, I wonder if you could clarify for this House and all the members in my riding what the cleanup process has been and how it is proceeding.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I'd first like to thank all of the members who expressed their concern for the people of Hamilton as I was very, very much concerned about this fire as well.

Everyone is eager to have the site cleaned up and the ministry will ensure that happens. The company, Environmental Consulting, stated that the work at the site has proceeded as quickly as possible through voluntary measures.

My ministry became concerned, however, that further progress at the site could slow down, as the environmental consultant and subcontractors indicated on August 7 that they had not been assured of payment. On August 12, the ministry issued a notice of a director's order to Plastimet and Mr Levy, the site owner.

By issuing the notice, the ministry has initiated the legal process that will require the site owner and the operator to continue the site cleanup. The order will call for the recipients to submit and implement a detailed cleanup plan for the site. On August 13, insurance funds were released, allowing a further cleanup procedure to occur. While the property owner is responsible for the cleanup, the ministry will assure the citizens of Hamilton that it will happen.

**Mrs Ross:** One of the major concerns I've heard expressed to me over a period of time has been the concern about the long-term health effects as a result of the fire. I've kept in close touch with your ministry on this issue, but I wonder if you could explain to the people in this House and to the people at home, to make sure they're kept informed of what's happening, what steps our ministry has taken.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** The ministry has been working closely with the medical officer of health for Hamilton-Wentworth. Air quality results available to date indicate that there should be no adverse long-term health effects resulting from exposure to any contaminants. This has been confirmed by the chief medical officer of health for the area. We will continue to monitor the aftermath of the fire as continuing sample results are made available to assist public and municipal officials in making decisions about health-related issues.

At a public meeting following the fire, 106 people signed up to have sampling done in their backyards, and we are developing a program to do that. On July 29 a community information trailer —

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** What about a public inquiry, Norm?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I was at that meeting. Where were you?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton Centre, I warn you to come to order. While I'm up, the member for Hamilton East, you can come to order as well. Please let the minister —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** We're concerned about people, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, thank you for your assistance.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As I was saying, on July 29 a community information trailer was opened to provide information directly to the residents in the area regarding the cleanup and other fire-related issues. It's manned by both the regional medical officer of health and the Ministry of Environment.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** In addition, we provided a committee of citizens with $40,000 of provincial money, which will help them retain professional expert advice —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

## RURAL POLICE SERVICE

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question for the Solicitor General. Minister, Bill 105 was an attempt to try to bring some fairness to the cost of policing right across this province, but now that the new property tax costs for policing have been released, they appear to be anything but fair. Some examples in the south: Bruce county, $175 per household; Brant county, $354. In the north it's even worse, from $169 per household in Parry Sound, to Cochrane at $508, to Kenora at $711 per house, average cost, for policing.

Minister, is this fair? How do you explain to some of the poorest municipalities and families in this province that they're going to have to pay more for policing than some of the most affluent areas of this province?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** This is all about fairness. As the member will recall, the last two reports by the Provincial Auditor have recommended that governments take this action with respect to fairness and equitable treatment in terms of policing costs right across this province. In fact, a colleague of the member across

the floor — I won't embarrass him by mentioning his name — when we made the announcement with respect to equitable financing indicated to me that he'd been waiting 30 years to hear that announcement. Various governments of all political stripes had failed to follow through on this promise. We're following through on a promise we made in opposition.

**Mr Ramsay:** I don't think any colleague in this House would consider this fair. One of the founding principles of this country and this province is that of cost-sharing. As Ontarians, we accept that we share the responsibility to ensure equal access to basic services across this province. Not only is this expressed in how we fund health care and education, but also social services. Why shouldn't Ontarians share equally the cost of basic protections for their families and their property? Why don't we have one-price policing across this province?

**1450**

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The estimates that were provided to municipalities are that, estimates. They are indications of actual, on-the-ground costs of the OPP in any given jurisdiction in the province.

With respect to the northern costs, I understand that some of them are quite high, but the costs of policing in some of the more remote areas of this province are indeed high. In fact, I met with the chief of police in Dryden a couple of weeks ago and indicated that at municipal level as well their costs are substantially higher on a per-household basis than those we have to cope with in south, western and eastern Ontario.

The government, through the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, has indicated on a number of occasions that if municipalities find themselves in difficult circumstances which they are completely unable to cope with, the government has established at least two funds to assist them.

We have to take a look at each individual case, assess the impact on any given municipality. No Ontarian will be faced with an undue or unfair burden as a result of these changes.

## ONTARIO HYDRO

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Energy. People are very worried about the environmental impact of Hydro's decision to fire up three fossil fuel plants as replacement power. Greenpeace and the Toronto Environmental Alliance held a press conference today to talk about the impact this will have on people's health.

Minister, I don't think you're going to deny saying this — I too have it in writing: You yourself said that the air will get dirtier. The experts at the press conference today had several suggestions as to how we might deal with this. I think everybody agrees that in the very short term we have no choice but to fire up some of these plants, but they have some very good suggestions. What I want from you today is your commitment that you will ensure that the legislative committee you've agreed to will be able to examine all the environmental implications of the firing up of these plants and alternatives to this for the future.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I would be most anxious to look into the environmental aspect of Hydro's proposed plan and would welcome any other suggestions which either the member or other groups might have to avoid firing up any of these fossil plants, if in fact that's an option.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Will the committee be able to look at it?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Of course.

**The Speaker:** The member for Riverdale is asking the question.

**Ms Churley:** Whose question is this, anyway?

Minister, I'm glad to hear that, and I'm glad to hear, after you sat down, that you will let the inquiry look at this.

This leads me to a very important question, that is, we need a process that is open and transparent. We need an independent process, not one controlled by your government. A legislative committee with a majority of Conservative members, which we've seen over and over again, means the government will control who appears before the committee, what issues they can address, what resources the committee will have and how they will use them; in other words, everything the committee does. It won't be an independent committee; it will be a government-controlled sham.

I'm asking you today, will you ensure that the committee that investigates Hydro will not have a majority of Tory MPPs and will have the independence to get at the real story behind Hydro and to look to the future and where we go from here?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I didn't even get to hear the last part of the question. The member for Riverdale, finish it.

**Ms Churley:** The last part of my question is indeed important. I want the minister to assure the House that any committee which investigates Hydro will not have a majority of government MPPs and will have the independence to get at the real story behind Hydro and also will have the independence to look at where we go in the future with our energy needs.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** By the very definition, all the committees during the NDP government and the past Liberal government were shams, because they were all dominated by government members. I don't believe all of the work those committees did was in fact a sham. I'm talking about majority governments, Mr Bradley. This is a legislative committee. I could not give that assurance without first, of course, talking to the House leader. I'll take it under consideration, but I'd say it would be an unusual departure from our normal practice of business here.

## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for privatization who also led this government's automotive insurance reform initiative. Minister, as you may be aware, Oshawa has long been known as a city which motivates Ontario and the area has a strong automotive tradition and economic base. This has developed a strong interest in automotive issues in Oshawa. In particular, car insurance rates have been an important concern to car owners.

For years the auto insurance rates have spiralled upwards. The Liberal Bill 68 sparked the increase with a 6.75% increase in one year. Further compounding the matter, the NDP Bill 164 resulted in rates going up by 21% over two years. However, I understand the insurance rates for private passenger vehicles have declined in the last year.

Minister, could you give my constituents —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** Thank you for the question. Through you, Mr Speaker, to my colleague from Oshawa, he's indeed correct. The previous two administrations handed Ontario drivers nothing but auto insurance rate increases and I'm pleased to say that on average the auto insurance plan that we brought forward called Bill 59 has provided good drivers in Ontario with up to now a 5.5% rate reduction year over year since it was introduced last year. In fact, the rates have gone down in each quarter year over year since the introduction of Bill 59 last November.

In addition to that, in addition to providing the rate relief to auto insurance that the previous jurisdictions were never able to do, we were able to provide auto drivers in this province the right to access to tort for claims against injuries they had received as a result of an auto accident in which they were not at fault, a substantial improvement under the existing auto insurance product that the previous two —

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Mr Ouellette:** This is certainly encouraging news for Ontario motorists. However, what my constituents would like to know is what the minister intends to do in order to ensure that this trend continues. Bill 59 also included measures to reduce the costly problem of auto insurance fraud. Minister, what exactly are these changes and how will they help keep auto insurance rates down?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** My colleague from Oshawa is indeed correct. The challenge is not over the day one introduces the bill. Of course, that's the view the prior administrations, both Liberal and NDP, had. We believe that our responsibility to Ontario drivers is to continue to work with the existing legislation, to work with the stakeholders, to work with the consumers, to try to continue to improve the product so that they indeed can have what they deserve: a fair insurance product in this province at a fair price where the rates don't escalate, like those which the two previous administrations provided Ontario.

We intend to have a full and thorough review, and in fact we put it in the legislation that within two years of introducing the bill we would have that review. We are now working with the stakeholders in auto insurance to make sure that we can speak to that review process when the time is up, two years from last November, a year coming from this November.

## HIGHWAY 407

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I have a question to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, on June 7 of this year, six months late, amid much fanfare, you opened the 407 toll highway. There is no question that from a transportation perspective this has been a tremendous success. Officials in your ministry indicated to us today that you're seeing volumes of between 275,000 and 300,000 vehicles a day and you expect those volumes to increase in September.

A very straight question, Mr Minister: When will you begin collecting tolls and who will provide the technology to do that collection when you do begin collecting them?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the honourable member for the question and I certainly want to say to this Legislature that the highway obviously is a tremendous success.

You're absolutely right: When are we going to start to charge for this highway? But I do believe we've had an opportunity to allow the people of Ontario to use the highway free of charge.

Basically what I would like to say to the member is that we are in the process of finalizing some of the concerns that were in place, mainly because of the success of the highway. Because of the success of the highway, the tolling technology was not adequate to make sure everyone was going to be deducted when they went through the interchanges.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I'm glad it's very amusing to the honourable members —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** There will be a supplementary.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Come to order, Minister of Transportation.

**1500**

**Mr Duncan:** If it wasn't such a financial mess, we might be laughing with the minister and the government members. I will remind the minister that it was your government that signed a deal with Hughes-Bell without the benefit of public tender, without the benefit of any kind of public scrutiny; signed, sealed and delivered. To date, the cost overruns we estimate on the toll system alone to be $100 million. That does not include the interest costs that are accruing on the capital that taxpayers bear the full risk of because you don't have the technology.

You're laughing about it and you're refusing to deal with it.

Will you take responsibility today? Tell us, first of all, when will the technology be available, how much does it cost, what penalties have you assigned to Hughes-Bell, and when will the government take responsibility and ensure taxpayers aren't exposed to any more risk due to your mismanagement and your incompetence, resulting from a bad deal that you signed after you became the government?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I would like to correct the honourable member. This is a deal that we inherited from the NDP. The highway, I've said, is a success. The delivery method maybe could be questionable, but certainly the highway is a success, and it still is a success. I also want to congratulate our government, because we embraced 407. We are doing everything to make sure it works because we have a responsibility to the people of Ontario. But it is a success, it really is. Technology that was in place was not sufficient to handle the amount of traffic volume we're getting. We as a government made the decision not to toll it in making sure we are going to be able to detect everyone who's going to use it.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** The technology we had in place was only capable of handling 3,000 vehicles an hour. The technology that we are putting in place will be able to —

**The Speaker:** New question.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Your megacity bill currently allows the ward of East York only two councillors. My colleague Frances Lankin, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, has tabled a private member's bill to increase that number to three. East York will not have the same equitable representation based on councillor to resident population ratio as the other cities. Will you support my colleague's private member's bill?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the honourable member, I'd be happy to take her request up with the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.

**Ms Churley:** I'm very, very pleased to hear that because to date, Deputy Premier, we have received nothing but no. I don't know what your colleagues have against the city of East York, because to date the member for Beaches-Woodbine has only heard no. I'm glad you're going to take it up because if you don't, if your caucus doesn't support this or find another way to give them three, they will not have equal representation —

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** And don't listen to the member for Don Mills, for heaven's sake, because he said no to this. This is a very sensible suggestion. East York cannot wait until the new megacity council is in place to do this. They will be hamstrung; they will not be able to operate properly. The community will not have fair and equal representation as the other cities do. I ask you to confirm that you will talk to the member for Don Mills and for East York and others and support this very small request for the democracy of East York.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I can assure that even as you were speaking I was conferring with the Chair of Management Board, who obviously has nothing against East York. I'd be more than happy to take up your request with the minister.

## INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

**Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph) :** Today my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. To keep our Canada strong and united we must create, promote and maintain economic prosperity across the country. You have stated that one of the best ways to achieve this is to break down interprovincial trade barriers. Only then can workers compete in a more fair internal Canadian market. I know that you recently attended the annual premiers' conference. The media has reported that the premiers came very close to eliminating these trade barriers. Workers and employers in my riding of Guelph are interested in knowing what work the premiers accomplished in ending job-killing barriers and, more specifically, what work Ontario is undertaking to end interprovincial trade barriers.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** I think we all know that the Honourable Bill Saunderson is the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism for the government, and I'd like to thank him for his leadership and his hard work.

At the annual premiers' conference, there were significant gains made in the whole area of reducing internal trade barriers. Everyone in this House knows that Canada has to work harder in this response, but the premiers endorsed that we move forward on implementation of the two-year agreement in two regards. First of all, they directed the ministers responsible to conclude negotiations on the agreement's procurement divisions to municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals, known as the MUSH sector.

In conclusion, they also directed trade ministers to examine, as a major priority, improvements to the agreement's code of conduct —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.

**Mrs Elliott:** Specifically I'm interested in the changes that Ontario is undertaking for reducing interprovincial trade barriers.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Again, I think this House is very much aware, with the assistance of both government opposition parties that began some of the work, that we have achieved an agreement with Quebec on labour mobility in the construction industry. We're all hopeful

that this will be successful so that we have more access to Quebec construction for Ontario contractors and workers.

With the commitment to open up the MUSH sector, our companies and workers in Ontario can look forward to getting access to a much larger market across the country and can be assured of a level playing field for the contracts that we're successful with.

I think all of these actions will mean more and better jobs for Ontarians and all Canadians. It's been ongoing work for all of us in this House since we've been in government collectively.

**1510**

## PETITIONS

### ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial government has discontinued the northern support grant which has traditionally compensated the north for assessment deficiency and increased service costs; and

"Whereas the north is confronted with unique costs, severe weather conditions, higher prices, difficult terrain, higher levels of unemployment and a lower per capita income; and

"Whereas the provincial government has indicated its intention to eliminate all municipal unconditional grants, including the conditional road subsidy; and

"Whereas there has been no indication that the Ontario mining tax which was implemented to fund northern support grants will be eliminated or reduced;

"Now therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" be petitioned to fully support and endorse "the position taken by the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, FONOM, in its paper entitled Fairness and Equity for Our North, and that the province be requested to enact a new act to establish and provide on a permanent basis northern Ontario investments for northern municipalities to provide funds to maintain the basic infrastructure in terms of roads, water and sewer facilities and provide funds to stimulate the social and economic development of the north; and

"Further, we the undersigned believe that the amount set aside for the northern development investments be equivalent to the amount set aside for the northern support grant in 1989 indexed on an annual basis."

I affix my signature to this petition, as every northern Ontarian is in support of it.

### WELLESLEY CENTRAL HOSPITAL

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the decision of closing Wellesley Central Hospital. We see this as cutting services, which will negatively affect the overall health of our community.

"We are deeply concerned about our future health care for treatment of acute illness and for emergency care.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the only solution."

This is signed by 306 residents of the city of Toronto. I have affixed my signature to it and I agree with the petitioners.

### COURT DECISION

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by 192 people from the London area. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We the undersigned respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

### KIDNEY DIALYSIS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there is no dialysis treatment currently available in the Cornwall area; and

"Whereas this lack of local medical treatment forces dialysis patients throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and beyond to drive to Ottawa or Kingston, sometimes several times each week, even during dangerous winter driving conditions, to receive this basic medical attention, incurring unnecessary stress, cost and inconvenience; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health promised on April 24, 1996, to rectify this medical shortfall by establishing a dialysis treatment facility in Cornwall; and

"Whereas this promise made by the Minister of Health has to date not been kept, resulting in local patients and their family and friends continuing to drive to Ottawa or Kingston for treatment several times per week, during the abovenoted conditions;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the Minister of Health follows through on the commitment made last April to set up this long-awaited and much-needed health service for Cornwall area residents."

That has been signed by 64 residents of Cornwall and SD&G, and I also signed the petition.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have the following petition to present to the Legislature:

"Over half the people in Ontario are women; and

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health; and

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's; and

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs; and

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America; and

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

I'm proud to add my name to theirs.

## ROCK MUSIC GROUP

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I have a petition signed by a group of 1,800 constituents who are extremely concerned about the performance of Marilyn Manson at the Ottawa-Carleton Congress Centre on August 1.

These taxpayers strongly object to this group, who promote teen suicide, racial hatred and anti-Christian activity, taking place in a facility which is built and constructed and operated with taxpayers' money. I share their outrage and I am pleased to sign my own name to the petition.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** I have a petition signed by more than 3,000 people. It's addressed to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas the Court of Appeal of Ontario has ruled that it is not an indecent act under the Criminal Code for a woman to go topless in public,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to immediately enact legislation to prohibit women from being topless in public."

I will sign the petition.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women; and

Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women's-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

I agree with the petitioners. This petition has been signed by 52 people of Toronto and we agree with them entirely. I've affixed my signature to it as well.

## WATER CHLORINATION

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the chemical substance chlorine was added to the people of Milton's pure well water supply in 1995; and

"Whereas the Halton region water delivery system in the town of Milton has received the regular maintenance and standard upgrade requirements outlined by the province and is supported by a standby chlorination unit sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat; and

"Whereas recent studies on the use of chlorine additives in drinking water have raised the spectre of chlorine as a possible cancer agent; and

"Whereas the people of the town of Milton overwhelmingly supported the belief that a standby chlorination requirement is sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that the Ontario government grant the people of Milton's request for a variance allowing only standby chlorination to be used in treating the pure well waters supplying Milton's water delivery system."

This has been signed by well over 300 people, and I'm very pleased to add my name to this list.

## CREMATORIUM IN VAUGHAN

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislature, the Ontario

Municipal Board and the Ministry of Environment, and it reads as follows:

"Re: Amendments to the city of Vaughan official plan and zoning bylaws to permit a crematory, a cemetery, a columbarium, crematorium and chapel on a 1.769-hectare site at the northeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue West in the city of Vaughan:

"We, the undersigned, object strongly to the cemetery, columbarium and crematorium that the city of Vaughan has approved so close to our residential community at the abovenoted location in the city of Vaughan. All of us live in the city of North York but in very close proximity to this proposed use. We object to having a large-scale death industry, including a cemetery and the burning of human bodies as a daily event, literally on our doorsteps.

"We are appalled that a conservation authority and the city of Vaughan municipality would do this to us and we ask for your help to stop it. We ask the Minister of Environment to intervene and stop it now. The health of thousands of residents will be at risk. We urge you not to grant approval to this project."

I concur with the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

**1520**

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions signed by members of CUPE, OPSEU, CAW and United Steelworkers. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workers' health and safety must be protected in the province of Ontario, especially the right to refuse work which is likely to endanger a worker, the right to know about workplace hazards and the right to participate in joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations help protect workers' health and safety and workers' rights in this area; and

"Whereas the government's discussion paper, Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, threatens workers' health and safety by proposing to deregulate the existing act and regulations to reduce or eliminate workers' health and safety rights and to reduce enforcement of health and safety laws by the Ministry of Labour; and

"Whereas workers must have a full opportunity to be heard about this proposed drastic erosion in their present protections from injuries and occupational diseases;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the present provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that public hearings on the discussion paper be held in at least 20 communities throughout Ontario."

I support these petitioners and add my name to theirs.

## DROUGHT RELIEF IN RENFREW

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that our elected officials work to obtain financial assistance for farmers in Horton township affected by the severe drought and throughout the county of Renfrew."

The member for Renfrew North and myself have been working with the Minister of Agriculture trying to obtain some direct assistance for this very serious situation, and I now affix my signature.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government's Bill 136 will effectively suspend all labour relation rights from municipal, health and school board employees affected by provincially forced amalgamations; and

"Whereas the Harris government's Bill 136 will hurt average workers in every community across Ontario, including nurses, teachers, firemen and police officers; and

"Whereas the Harris government's Bill 136 was designed to provide the government with sweeping powers to override longstanding labour negotiation rights for workers, including the right to negotiate, the right to strike, the right to seek binding arbitration and the right to choose a bargaining unit;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support our MPP, Frank Miclash, in his opposition to this legislation and join him in calling upon the Harris government to repeal Bill 136, which creates a climate of confrontation in Ontario."

I have attached my name to the petition as well.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the protections of the Rent Control Act;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to allow a landlord to charge a tenant who moves into an apartment whatever the landlord can get away with;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to raise the limit of how high rents can increase for all tenants;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the 'rent freeze' which has been successful in forcing some landlords to repair their buildings;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent laws, which provide true protection for tenants, in place."

I am proud to affix my signature.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over half the people of Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

This is signed by many people from my riding, and I'll sign it.

## NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 34(a), the member for Hamilton East has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Environment and Energy concerning the fire in Hamilton. This matter will be debated at 6 pm this evening.

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 SUR LA RÉFORME DE L'AIDE SOCIALE

Mrs Ecker moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 142, An Act to revise the law related to Social Assistance by enacting the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, by repealing the Family Benefits Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act and the General Welfare Assistance Act and by amending several other Statutes / Projet de loi 142, Loi révisant la loi relative à l'aide sociale en édictant la Loi sur le programme Ontario au travail et la Loi sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées, en abrogeant la Loi sur les prestations familiales, la Loi sur les services de réadaptation professionnelle et la Loi sur l'aide sociale générale et en modifiant plusieurs autres lois.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 142, the Social Assistance Reform Act. This bill introduces two new legislative frameworks: the Ontario Disability Support Program Act and the Ontario Works Act. I will be followed by the member for York-Mackenzie, Frank Klees, who will speak to the specifics of the Ontario Works Act, and the member for Chatham-Kent, Jack Carroll, who will address the specifics of the Ontario Disability Support Program Act.

This legislation keeps two of the major commitments in the Common Sense Revolution. We promised major reform for Ontario's welfare system. We promised the creation of a new and separate program for people with disabilities.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Point of order, Mr Speaker: It's not clear whether the member is saying she is splitting her time between those people and she needs to get unanimous consent in order to split her time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles Morin):** I didn't hear anything so please carry on.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much. We promised the creation of a new and separate program for people with disabilities. With this legislation we are keeping both promises.

For people with disabilities, this will create a new program which significantly improves income and employment supports. For Ontario's welfare system, self-sufficiency will become the goal. We have been guided by three principles in these reforms: fairness, accountability and effectiveness.

Social programs simply must be fair to both the people who need them and the taxpayers who pay for them. There is a mutual and interlocking set of accountabilities. Ontario Works participants are accountable for their own efforts to become self-sufficient and to join or rejoin the workforce.

Government is accountable to taxpayers and to those for whom the programs are designed. In addition to short-term financial support, government must both provide practical steps that will aid in a rapid return to employment and encourage the economic climate that will ensure those jobs will be available.

Programs that merely provide financial assistance that make no contribution towards assisting, for example, welfare recipients back into the workforce are a double failure. They let down both people who need assistance and the taxpayers. They perpetuate the cost and they prolong the problem.

Effectiveness means far more than spending dollars where they are most needed. Effectiveness means programs that work and that are seen to work. Effectiveness produces positive results — the shortest

route to self-sufficiency and a job in the case of people on welfare. For people with disabilities, it produces better control over living and job supports, more assured income and a better chance of securing and retaining work. Fairness, accountability and effectiveness.

**1530**

Let me now address the two reform packages in greater detail, beginning with the Ontario disability support program. People with disabilities have been telling Ontario governments for years that the system wasn't working. Their income support came from welfare, and that fact has limited society's view of what people with disabilities can do. It has failed to match their own self-expectations. It has categorized them as permanently unemployable, a label and stigma that is false, unfair and wrong. Put most simply, the old welfare program did not meet their needs.

For people with disabilities, employment supports and services were delivered under the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act. There were some success stories, but there were also many horror stories from a system staggering under arbitrary rules and processes.

I've spoken before of the man who needed artificial arms for a training course as a mechanic. When the training was over he got his licence, but the program took the arms back. He wasn't deemed unemployable, because he was a licensed mechanic, so he couldn't get disability benefits. He couldn't get help from another program because that supplied prosthetic limbs only to assist in acts of daily living, not for employment aids. And on it went.

This isn't a criticism of the people working in the system, those who deliver those services. The fault lies with the system itself. Inside and outside government a great many people knew what was wrong, but somehow the necessary political priority to fix it never materialized. It has now. These criticisms were made forcefully and repeatedly to us during the consultations we conducted. People with disabilities and the organizations that represent them asked for a separate program to meet their needs; we agreed. They asked for more personal control and choice, more flexibility and practicality in the supports to employment that were available to them; we agreed. They asked for an end to mandatory counselling. It should be available for those who do need it, but not forced on those who don't; again we agreed.

The important new focus has to be on abilities, not disabilities. The new program has to look at what people can do and want to do, not what they can't do, and it will. The final instruction from the consultations was simply to get on with it, and we are.

The purpose and goal of this legislation is a comprehensive and effective program for people with disabilities. It will meet their unique needs. It will provide greater fairness and consistency.

Our first objective was that the reformed program begin with clear and understandable criteria for eligibility. They will assess how a disability restricts activities at home, in the community and in the workplace. We will end frequent retesting and reassessment. Obviously, retesting is needed and useful in cases where conditions are expected to improve, but in others repeated assessments are personally intrusive and a waste of time and money.

We know that some people with disabilities need lifelong support. For others, the needs are of shorter duration or cyclical. In both cases, many people with disabilities want to live and work with as much independence as possible. So our second objective is that the new program provide greater opportunities for independence.

There are unique costs that result from disability, and it is only fair that these be recognized more fully. Under the old system, for example, when a person with a disability found employment but the job did not work out for whatever reason, there are delays in the reinstatement of benefits. They have to reapply, leaving them for a period without disability benefits. That practice will end. Benefits will be reinstated immediately if the employment cannot continue.

There are other improvements in the new program. We intend to raise the limits on cashable assets and on retention of compensation awards. We will remove the fees for technological aids that assist in daily living. We will permit loans against life insurance policies to assist with the costs of such serious illnesses as AIDS and cancer.

All families in Ontario want to help their children to a secure future. That is particularly true for the families of people with disabilities. Those families spoke loudly and clearly during the consultations. They wanted and they will have the ability to make contributions to their loved one without triggering a financial penalty. They will now be able to buy specially equipped furniture or appliances or bathroom fixtures, for example, without that cost being deducted from the disability benefits their family member receives. They wanted and will have the ability to make annual contributions towards other costs to improve the quality of life of their family member, such as vacation, travel or housing supplements. They wanted and will have higher limits on inheritances and more flexible rules on their use. They wanted and will have more generous rules governing family trusts.

The final major theme we heard repeatedly during the consultations was that people with disabilities do work, can work and want to work. So the third objective is to assist them towards that goal with practical employment supports that produce real and measurable results. The range of potential supports will be broader, from employment planning assistance and skills development through technological aids and devices to interpreters and ongoing job supports. The range is very wide and will be tailored to individual needs. It might include a voice-activated computer, for example, or specialized training or job coaching. Consultation and advisory services for the employer, the new employee and his or her fellow workers will be available both initially and on an ongoing, on-

demand basis. People with disabilities that create a substantial barrier to seeking, getting or keeping a job will have much more choice and much more control over the supports they need and receive.

In replacing rather than simply amending the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act, we are recognizing the judgement of people with disabilities themselves. The existing act had its successes, but its weaknesses were so widespread that fundamental change was needed. That act is being replaced. We intend to see that the Ontario disability support program is significantly more effective than its predecessor.

Among other changes, there will be more resources going directly to services and less to administration. The current training allowances under the VRS Act will be reinvested in employment supports under the Ontario disability support plan. When the system is completely implemented, spending on employment supports for people with disabilities will increase from approximately $18 million today to close to $35 million.

Another change has to do with drug and alcohol addiction. Under the current welfare system, people with drug and alcohol dependencies are included with people with disabilities, regardless of their specialized needs. That will no longer be the case. In future, for those requiring treatment for addiction, there will continue to be substance abuse programs available through the Ministry of Health. If income support is necessary, those individuals would apply for financial assistance under Ontario Works.

The new Ontario disability support program, then, has three clear objectives: It recognizes unique needs; it supports independence; it supports employment. Moreover, it takes into account the shared responsibilities of governments, communities, families and individuals. It translates the principles of fairness, accountability and effectiveness into reality.

**1540**

We were therefore particularly pleased at the initial reaction that welcomed these proposals. Mr Gary Malkowski, of the Canadian Hearing Society, a former NDP member of this Legislature, described the bill as the most positive kind of announcement we've had in some time. The NDP member for Beaches-Woodbine said on June 5 that the proposed legislation has the potential of becoming one of the most significantly positive programs for people with disabilities in Ontario. I thank them both for those comments and I agree. It is this government's intention to ensure that potential is realized. We remain open to additional ideas and suggestions while the legislation is being considered and the regulations developed.

Let me now turn to the changes we are proposing for Ontario's welfare system. It is difficult to imagine an area of public policy that was more in need of fundamental reform. When we assumed office just over two years ago, Ontario's welfare system was out of control. Previous NDP and Liberal governments increased payment levels to record heights. And the end result? The number of people on welfare tripled between 1985 and 1995. Costs went up by a factor of five, from $1.3 billion to $6.8 billion annually. In just one decade NDP and Liberal governments had spent $40 billion on welfare.

When we became the government, 12% of Ontarians were trapped on welfare. Canada's richest province had the highest per capita welfare caseload in the country. I think that's a shameful record. Even the previous government recognized that the system wasn't working. Former Premier Bob Rae said, "It doesn't make sense to pay people to sit at home." One of his community and social services ministers said: "If there's one thing just about everyone agrees with, it's that Ontario's welfare system isn't working. It's an expensive system. It's a confusing system." But that recognition did not translate into needed reforms. By June 1995 there were 1.3 million people trapped on welfare.

We were elected to do, actually do, what previous governments had only talked about and it is important to note that these legislative reforms are the next and most important step in a series of concrete reforms, many of them already in place.

We started with the obvious: People are better off working. First came jobs. Our government's economic and fiscal policies are aimed straight at creating a climate of sustainable economic growth. The results speak for themselves: 124,000 new jobs in the last five months alone. To give people on welfare the skills and experience to help them seek, find and hold jobs, we introduced mandatory workfare. Doing nothing is no longer a choice.

But our reforms did not stop there. Welfare rates were reduced. The new rates are still 10% above the average of Canada's other nine provinces. Recipients are allowed to earn back the difference between the old and new rates without penalty. It was and is the most generous earn-back provision in the country.

To protect the system for those who truly need it, we must stop those who abuse it. We established a welfare fraud hotline, the first of several moves to reduce and eliminate this theft from taxpayers and those on the system.

To stop those on welfare from collecting benefits from government programs they are not eligible for, we are developing new information-sharing agreements with other provinces and Ottawa and between ministries. This is necessary, for example, to stop welfare cheques going to prisoners. We tightened eligibility for teenagers, for people living in common-law relationships, for people who left jobs voluntarily or refused employment. Those and other reforms are already showing results.

There are 210,000 fewer Ontarians relying on welfare, an unprecedented reduction in the caseload. An independent 1996 survey found that more than 60% of those leaving the system left for employment-related reasons. Over $8 million has been recovered through the welfare fraud hotline. More than 36,000 people have already participated in one or more of the mandatory Ontario Works activities in the more than 35 municipalities

already delivering the program. Participants' experience has been overwhelmingly positive. So has that of the municipalities and organizations working with them.

Those initial reforms were important. They proved what could be accomplished with a different approach. But they are just a beginning, a downpayment on the commitment we made to Ontarians to deliver fundamental welfare reform. This legislation before us today simply continues down that path. As promised, it will fundamentally change the welfare system from handing out cheques to getting people back to work, from trapping people in dependency to encouraging self-sufficiency. This bill was designed using the same three principles referred to earlier: fairness, accountability and effectiveness.

A welfare system has to be fair to the working Ontarians who pay for it. It has to be fair to those who need its help. A fair welfare system has to be a program of last resort designed to get people back into the workforce. A fair welfare system has to ensure that people are better off at work than on welfare. Welfare is not a way of life. Welfare is about to become a way back to work.

These changes in both philosophy and practice have been criticized, but the criticism ignores several essential points: there is no humanity in warehousing people in the name of social assistance; there is no compassion in fostering dependence instead of building self-respect and self-reliance; there is no fairness in wasting human potential by not acting to fix what we know is not working.

A good welfare system provides income when people have nowhere else to turn. A good system simultaneously helps them find the fastest possible route to a paying job, of the jobs that Ontario's growing economy is producing. Government must be actively accountable for designing and delivering the programs and we will be. Those who receive welfare must be actively accountable for participating in those programs and they also will be.

I want to draw the members' attention to six changes in particular proposed in the bill: (1) to include sole-support parents; (2) newly mandatory services for children; (3) the future recovery of a portion of taxpayers' investment from welfare recipients who own their own homes; (4) new measures to reduce fraud; (5) an improved delivery system; and (6) the ministry's role in monitoring compliance.

First, the changes for sole-support parents. We know that the longer a parent is on welfare, the tougher it is to get off. We know that children are better off when their parent is working. We therefore intend to provide single parents with the same opportunities available to others on welfare. Participation in Ontario Works will be mandatory for single parents with children in school. If child care is needed, it will be provided. The government has committed $30 million to meet these needs. The inclusion of sole-support parents is one of the most effective ways of breaking the cycle of dependency that can be so depressingly familiar: Grow up on welfare, live on welfare.

Second, we are proposing an improvement in access to basic services for children. Until now, basic vision and dental care for children in financial need have been discretionary under the General Welfare Assistance Act. We believe that those services should be mandatory for all children who are beneficiaries of Ontario Works, and under the new program they will be.

The third key change here deals with recovery of some portion of the taxpayers' investment. An important authority conferred by the Ontario Works Act relates to the ability to place a lien on the residence of a person on welfare where circumstances warrant. The purpose is to allow taxpayers to recover a portion of their investment and support, but only when a home is eventually sold or refinanced or when ownership changes. No one is going to be forced to sell their home to satisfy such a lien.

A fourth change would improve our ability to fight fraud. Estimated fraud levels have ranged from 3% to 10%. The Provincial Auditor has stated that fraud may be as high as $100 million a year. Various commentators have said that those figures are either way too high or way too low. I say they're way too much and no amount of fraud is acceptable. This form of theft from taxpayers is not going to be tolerated, not just because it takes money away from those who truly need it. Welfare fraud destroys the credibility and justification for a welfare system in the minds of those who pay for it. It stigmatizes those doing their best to get off the system.

**1550**

The Ontario Works Act provides two broad approaches to reducing and eliminating welfare fraud. There are tougher rules for who can get welfare and tougher penalties for those who abuse it. The new legislation also gives government the authority to use new identification technologies. We must be certain that only those who need welfare will receive it.

One of the technologies with great potential is finger scanning. Members who have heard or read misinformed criticism of this technology should know that finger scanning is not fingerprinting as used by police authorities. It is a much more sophisticated approach to individual identification and verification.

The process of electronically scanning a finger produces a unique identification number. It can only be reproduced when the same individual's finger is scanned again. Having the number does not allow the re-creation of the fingerprint and therefore protects privacy. The only purpose is to prevent the claiming of benefits under multiple names or false identities. It is just one tool, but an important one, and it is now being tested and evaluated by Metro Toronto. If it can be used on a cost-effective basis to reduce fraud, we plan to introduce it province-wide.

The fifth key change in this bill is structural. The Ontario Works Act contains the first substantial legislative changes to how we actually deliver welfare programs and services in more than 30 years. The existing system, delivered by two levels of government, created needless duplication and waste. The bill provides for one

welfare system delivered at the municipal level. Municipalities have a proven track record in delivering welfare. These governments are closer to their communities, they are more flexible and they can be more cost-effective.

At the same time, we will reduce the number of municipalities delivering welfare from some 200 to approximately 50, thereby streamlining administration. Municipal and first nation delivery agents will be able to build on their experience and strength in providing programming that is sensitive to local needs. In addition to the changed delivery system, the bill also provides for a more effective and streamlined appeal process.

The sixth and final key change concerns the role of the ministry. The legislation ensures that across the province, Ontario Works will be delivered within a comprehensive framework of standards and common systems. The ministry will monitor compliance and ensure the standards are respected. I should emphasize that this applies to assistance under both the income and employment portions of Ontario Works.

If welfare is based on mutual responsibilities, if we are going to require people to participate in program activities as a condition of eligibility, there is a quid pro quo. Government and its delivery agents, in this case municipalities, have an equal responsibility to offer people an integrated program of the services and supports they need to become self-sufficient. The act provides the ministry with the authority to hold delivery agents responsible for making those services available

In summary, our experience with Ontario Works already shows that the new approaches are working. The proposed legislative changes will help them work better still. For participants in Ontario Works, community participation is allowing them to improve their employability and make contacts with prospective employers. Referral to basic education and jobs-specific skills training is providing the opportunity to upgrade qualifications. Job search assistance and employment placement are delivering direct help in finding and getting a job.

These aren't just theories. Ontario Works participants themselves are telling us they work.

I'd like to read from an excerpt from a letter by a participant from Brockville:

"The placement has given me an opportunity to demonstrate my skills. Some of my co-workers and a few business associates have offered to supply me with employment references. As a result of my Ontario Works placement, my self-esteem has improved tremendously. I am a much happier, confident person today and I am only in my third month. I strongly support and recommend this program, and I truly believe anyone would benefit from participating in Ontario Works."

A 22-year-old single mother in Sault Ste Marie recently said this about her experience with Ontario Works: "It's a great opportunity for me to get job experience. I love it, being able to do something with myself, knowing I can give my kids a future. I don't want to rely on the government. Now I feel better about myself."

The purpose of the Ontario Works legislation is exactly that kind of outcome, to give people on welfare the opportunity to get off. The three components of mandatory workfare — community participation, job supports and job placement — are being tested. We find they work in theory and in practice.

The programs that will result from this bill are fair to taxpayers and to those on welfare. All involved are clearly and specifically accountable. The positive results already available to date prove the effectiveness of these new approaches.

The Social Assistance Reform Act fulfils our promises to people with disabilities, to people on welfare and to the taxpayers of Ontario. The Ontario Works Act significantly improves the job prospects of people who are required, by economic circumstances, to rely on welfare for their existence. The Ontario Disability Support Program Act deals separately and justifiably with people with disabilities. They are a very special group of Ontarians. They do not ask and do not want charity. They do require full recognition of their abilities and their needs.

This legislation presents to both groups the prospect of a better future, a better life. It brings to both groups significant improvements in the way they are treated by their society. For Ontario taxpayers, but most certainly for the hundreds of thousands of our citizens who will benefit even more directly, who will finally see political will and political action replace political rhetoric, this legislation is a significant and common sense step forward.

I strongly recommend this legislation for the favourable consideration of all members.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I'll briefly respond to the minister, and we'll get an opportunity later, after my colleague does the opening part on behalf of our caucus.

Clearly, as this government has done with any type of welfare reform, they have taken the opportunity to bring in some small changes that are beneficial, but within that they have incorporated hundreds of changes that continue to hurt the poor in this province.

We have seen a track record from day one. We've seen a government that decided their first action was to cut welfare benefits by 22%, a government that has continued its attack on the needy and the poor in Ontario right from day one. No one in this House would disagree that we need meaningful welfare reform, welfare reform that makes sense, welfare reform that helps people, but what we have seen from this government continuously, time and time again, it's simply a continued attack on the poor for sheer crass political purposes.

Every time the numbers start dropping, every time the government agenda gets thrown off, they bring back workfare, they talk about workfare, not because workfare makes sense, not because workfare helps people who are receiving assistance today, but because workfare's politically a hot potato for the government. It's an exploitation of the needy and it's one you pushed throughout the

campaign time and time again. You didn't care about beating up people. You didn't care about the 400,000 kids for whom you've cut 22% off benefits. You know why? Because the whiz kids in the Premier's office told you that'll sell. You didn't care how it would impact people.

There isn't one jurisdiction in North America where workfare has been a success, unless you want to talk about New Jersey, unless you want to talk about New York state. If you want to compare yourself to that, you go right ahead. Ontarians pride themselves on not being New Jersey or New York and this government is leading us down that path.

**1600**

**Mrs Boyd:** It is very clear in the introduction that the minister has given to Bill 142 and in her ministerial statement earlier today that she continues to play on the concerns of the electorate in this province around issues of welfare, that she continues to play on the myth that has been created, largely by right-wing politicians in North America, that those who are poor are to be blamed for being poor, they are to be controlled, they are to be forced to work, they are at every step to be considered to be less than eligible for due consideration under the law.

It is going to be important as we go through the discussion of this bill for those of us in the opposition parties to have an opportunity to point out exactly how virulent is the attack on those who are most vulnerable in our society under the guise of improvement to the welfare system.

There is no one, I would say, who would suggest that our current system did not have to be reformed. I don't think there's a recipient in the province who would make that claim. I certainly don't think there is a politician or an administrator who would make that claim.

But the way in which the government has gone about its change, the rhetoric it has used against those who are most vulnerable in trying to boost its own political fortunes at the expense of the poor, is quite reprehensible. It is going to be important for us as we look at these changes to show exactly what is going to be beneficial and what is going to be harmful and what changes in this act are going to be needed if they're to have the effect that the minister so proudly says they will.

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I appreciate the opportunity to make a couple of quick comments on the statement by the minister. The first thing I'd like to comment on is the member for Hamilton East, who is now so critical of our Ontario Works program. I believe, if the record is right, that during his election campaign he professed to believe in the principle of asking people to work for their welfare benefits, so it's interesting now that he's in opposition that he is critical of a program that we promised, that we're now delivering on.

The Ontario disability support plan: The member for Hamilton Centre talked about how we are picking on the most vulnerable. I believe the most vulnerable are the people whom we are moving out of the welfare system into their own system of the Ontario disability support plan, another commitment that we made during the election that we are now delivering on. Those folks should never have been in the welfare system. We should be allowing them to participate in a lifestyle that is commensurate with what it should be. We should be giving them opportunities to be trained to work, rather than be reassessed and reassessed and reassessed. We should give them real opportunities to learn working skills that they could put into practice.

Contrary to what the opposition would say about what we have done, in actual fact we have made the welfare system a system where here is an opportunity to learn some skills, to get back to work so that you can become a contributing member of society instead of being trapped in the system.

For the Ontario disability support plan for the people who are disabled, we have said to them: "We are going to put you into a plan of your own. You're not welfare recipients. We're going to take good care of you and we're going to give you opportunities to learn a skill so that you can back to meaningful employment."

I compliment the minister on a great act.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Minister, would you like to sum up?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I think that my honourable colleague Mr Carroll has made some very good points, but I think it is important to recognize that the social assistance system is not to keep people on for great periods of time. The social assistance system is to help people get off the system. I think it's important to recognize that 210,000 individuals are no longer relying on the social assistance system. They don't want to be there. They want to get off. They want to get jobs.

This government takes that responsibility very, very seriously, not only to the taxpayers who pay for that system but also to those individuals who want off. That's why, through our economic agenda, through trying to encourage and support the private sector in doing what it does best in terms of creating jobs, we are moving forward to make sure those positions, those jobs are out there. We are also moving forward through our welfare reforms to try to make sure that individuals who are on that system get the help they need to get off.

One of the very fulfilling, if you will, or interesting experiences that I've had in the last many months is to go around to some of those workfare sites, some of those community placements where people are having the opportunity to contribute back. To talk to those individuals one on one and in small groups and to listen to their stories has certainly reaffirmed my belief that we owe those individuals the help to get off the system.

That's why we are proceeding with these reforms. The fact that the public supports these reforms, I make no apologies for that. This government said that we were going to do this when we went out and asked for the people's support. We are now proceeding with that and I make no apologies for that, and I think that is a record that is certainly something the public expects. This is not

something that has been designed to attack the poor, as the opposition keeps saying. This is something to help.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your time is up. Further debate? The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** At the outset I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Hamilton East.

**The Acting Speaker:** Unanimous consent to split with the member for Hamilton East? Agreed.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thank you. I would like to say initially that the bill is very large in nature and it will take an awful lot of time, I think, and I expect to have that time through the process of debate, through committee hearings, through additional debate in third reading, to get through all of the detail that is in the bill we have before us, Bill 142.

If I may just start with a brief comment on the minister's presentation, if we had to listen to that salve, to that soothing voice telling us, "Everything's okay," you would think that there would be bouquets of flowers at her feet while we pray to the altar of Mike Harris for all the wonderful things he's done for people on social assistance. Unfortunately, all of the people in Ontario who work with people who are in need understand that is diametrically opposed to the reality in Ontario today. What we know is true in Ontario is that finally, after a significant recession of the early 1990s which continued for some extended period of time, things are certainly moving in some places in Ontario.

What that means immediately for many, many individuals in Ontario is people are allowed to come off the welfare system and move into real jobs, that in fact welfare rolls and employment rates have an inverse relationship. When employment rates rise, welfare rolls decline. What's very worrisome is that knowing that is happening, knowing that our economy is starting to turn around, we're seeing proof of that not only in the United States but certainly across the board in Canada, and we would hope that Ontario too would be experiencing that, given that we're one of the largest economies in Canada.

So, yes, we expect that welfare rolls will drop. It's a function of the economy. What we do see, though, is a government, Mike Harris particularly, deciding that this is a good time to say he's the guy who's doing it. He's moving these people off because he's creating the reforms in the system that have long been overdue.

Let me tell you that every government, despite its political stripe, has always advocated getting people into real jobs. All of us, the Liberals, the NDP, all of them tried to do exactly what they could to move people into real jobs.

This would in no way explain the litany, the many, many examples of punitive measures that we find in Bill 142. When you consider that we are adding fingerprinting — criminals today in Canada are fingerprinted and now we are seeing fingerprinting — oh excuse me, they're not calling it that. They're calling it biometric information. I think I learned that word on Star Trek some time ago. They're introducing fingerprinting, which to date is only used for criminals, in Bill 142, dealing with those who receive social assistance.

We have probably the greatest number of areas where you have no right of appeal as an individual, which in my view and in the view of many — I think the legal position will be that it is against the Ontario Human Rights Code that merely as a function of your financing you will not be allowed the basic right to appeal decisions that have been made, not from a Social Assistance Review Board, as in the past, that you would say was judicial, but in fact a tribunal that's been struck by this government with no right of appeal for individuals.

**1610**

All I can say initially is, God help us, every one us, if we can't find a job in this province, God help anybody who is now being threatened with the loss of a job, because when your employment insurance runs out, we don't know what's going to happen to you in Ontario. What used to happen in the late 1980s and very early 1990s, when Ontario was in an upswing, was we had some massive population increases in Ontario. We certainly had numbers of refugees and immigrants coming, but we also had a significant movement of people from across Canada coming to Ontario who accounted for a huge surge in Ontario's population.

While the government wants to say, "Oh, well, those Liberals, even when they were doing well in terms of the economy, their welfare rates didn't decline," the truth is you can't look at any one area as if it's only its own little silo, because everything affects our economy and certainly everything affects our welfare rolls. It's true this government will significantly limit your access to a system if you need help, and my greatest fear is — I hope it's not you, I hope it's not the people in my riding of Windsor-Sandwich and I hope it's not the people in Wawa, people who used to know that even though the economy has changed and for some reason that plant closure has affected them and they know employment will only last a certain period of time — I just hope it's not you who finds you actually have to turn to Mike Harris's new Ontario for some kind of support because circumstances you haven't been able to control have affected you in such a negative manner. Let me tell you, this is not a place you're going to want to be in.

Let me say too that workfare is not new. It's not new to Ontario. It's not new to Canada. It has certainly been tried in many jurisdictions in North America, specifically in the United States. Since we looked at other jurisdictions so carefully, why didn't we go further to ask these jurisdictions what kinds of results they were seeing from bringing in workfare?

I wanted to mention the Wisconsin model in particular, because now, after having introduced workfare some time ago, we're starting to see some pretty significant results, and I might tell you it's not a pretty picture.

I reference an actual script that was on a radio program. The reporters there talked to the Wisconsin bureaucrats and community people who were involved with the workfare program there, and I think it's worthwhile in this opening to just remark on what their experiences were.

There was an individual who works with homeless people there and what he said with the introduction in Wisconsin of workfare was, "The reality is that nobody knows what happened to these people" — their welfare rates dropped dramatically as well; no one knew what happened to the people — "The state wants to say, 'You know, well, some of them moved out of state and some of them got a job.'" The truth is nobody knew. When you're dealing with, in that case, only 14,000 households, he couldn't understand why it was so incomprehensible that some of them certainly wound up in shelters.

They give a brief description: "...at the Joyhouse shelter in Milwaukee, the doors burst open to admit a running tangle of children and, following more slowly behind, their mothers. Thirty-three-year-old...and her two daughters sagged together on a couch. Grant has just spent a 10-hour day working for less than minimum wage at a day care centre, the training job set up for her under Wisconsin's Welfare to Work program." The worker at this place, not the individual, says: "It's not working too good." You know, these women, they're all living on the street now.

"Joyhouse, like all the city shelters, is taking in about 25% more people.... Visits to food banks are up 14%, soup kitchens 20%." While this is hardly what they consider a huge calamity, "it is an embarrassment for state officials, and all the more so because government's ineptitude is partly to blame." The cabinet secretary there in charge of welfare admitted that using all the dense legalese in the letters that were sent to welfare families about the coming changes, "We ultimately found out or realized that that really was confusing." No kidding.

"And when people called for help, they found case workers retired, transferred, or swamped." Stewart in fact admits this may not have been the best time to streamline staff.

"They did, however, choose this moment to replace the computers with a new system and all the usual high-tech glitches that entails," and the homeless advocate there said "too many families are penalized for what later turns out to be bureaucratic bungling."

My concerns here in Ontario are that the Mike Harris government has a track record when it comes to changing systems in ministries. It's an absolute disaster.

I'd like to hearken back to the family support program. We had thousands and thousands of moms out there not receiving funding that was very rightly theirs through family support, because the Attorney General decided they were going to fix the system, decided to change all the computer systems at the same time they closed all the regional offices down, so there weren't the people to help individuals who were having trouble accessing the system. Ultimately what is most offensive is that this is a minister and a government who stand up and purport to be for children, and when they've made these kinds of changes, the ones who have been the most impacted have been children — not a blink of an eye from this government.

It's the children who have been affected. All those Conservative MPPs can sit there and start rifling off statistics, if you will, about people off the welfare system, and all I can tell you is that your government policy to date where it impacts on welfare recipients has not once taken a look at how these changes are affecting children. It is not a government priority, and if you continue to say it, it doesn't make it so. Government of this day, in Mike Harris's Ontario, children are simply not a priority.

We don't believe it's a crime to be on welfare. We do believe that in most cases it's a function of economic stability in the town you're in, the city you're in. There will always be cases of people who abuse the system and it is completely unacceptable, but the response to that has to be something that's workable and not based simply on ideology.

Workfare pilot projects so far haven't been successful and municipalities so far participating, as the minister admits today, are a mere 36 communities out of over 750 communities in Ontario. That in itself is an abysmal failure, and I'll tell you what I believe is the reason for that. Social service commissioners right across Ontario, from day one, were afraid that workfare would come to their communities, because they knew. These are people who work in the field, who work with recipients of social assistance. They understand what the needs are of people and also understand that mandating workfare does not work.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: So much to say and so few people have chosen to be here to listen to what are indeed words of wisdom, and a reminder that a lot needs to be done in addressing those basic needs here in our province, and who better to do it than the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**The Acting Speaker:** Do you have a point of order?

**Mr Pouliot:** Would you check if we have a quorum, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**1620**

**Mrs Pupatello:** I wanted the opportunity to speak with MPPs across the House. I feel they might be enlightened by what happens in other parts of Canada and other parts of the US that have since realized that workfare has been a failure. What frightens me is that the government isn't learning from mistakes that others have made. They are prepared to go down the same path and make the same

blunders and the same errors. The point is, in this case children will feel that and so will individuals who can afford it the least.

We also understand that given information the minister herself gave us today, some 36,000 recipients were somehow on a workfare program. What we know to be true, in checking out those numbers, is that they're all overinflated. In fact, when the minister went to all the municipalities to say: "What have you got for us? Have you got a project for us yet?" they didn't want to participate. All of a sudden the municipalities started feeling the heavy hammer of Mike Harris. Once again there was a threat of withdrawal of funds if municipalities didn't participate in the program.

Second, when the initial numbers came in the minister was so aghast that the response was so poor that they went back to the municipalities and said: "You're going to have to beef up those numbers. That's just not good enough." They took people who were in a whole myriad of programs and just threw them all in so the minister today could stand up and say, "We have 36,000 people in the program." It's a crock. That is not the real number. Thirty-six communities out of over 750 and you have had to beg, then you got no response, then you threatened and you started getting some response.

The way the municipal grants now are going to be structured, we still don't know what the qualifying factors will be in any city or town getting grants from the province for any of the services you've now dumped on them. What we know will happen is that the grants, the community support grants you've offered, the strings attached will be their participation in workfare even though social services commissioners right across the board will tell you that it didn't work in the 1930s and it will not work today. There are other jurisdictions; it doesn't work there either.

What it does is serve a very populist mantra. When people are feeling unstable and when people are feeling threatened themselves — will they have a job? — that is when there is a factor, a resentment of people who are somehow being helped by this system. But it is government's responsibility to fight that, and when it comes time to actually setting priorities, people who in other circumstances would be very bright and intelligent probably checked their brains at the door when they walked into the minister's office and actually allowed ideologues to draft policy the government has to follow. It is a government's responsibility, when they're writing laws, that it can't just move in and drift with the winds of time. You have to write laws that can be applicable to everyone. The minister's own words of "fairness" and "accountability" have absolutely no place in Bill 142.

Experts in the field agree that reducing welfare rolls involve several components. Those several things will prepare a recipient for the workforce: improving life skills; literacy training; a very key, important component is child care, education; trades or skills training. To successfully reduce that welfare, the government has to understand that there has to be a real job to go to.

I'd like the members to know that three quarters of all the people who are currently in the welfare system have been in some form of employment over the last five years. The system indeed has been a transitory one for people. You will hear examples of generational welfare. I will admit that exists. I will also tell you that at your convenience as a government, you have overinflated that just to prove your case to this populist mantra because you knew that's what people wanted to hear.

Mike Harris and the Conservative government, since they took office, cut literacy programs, cut child care — even though it appeared in the budget they cut it. Now they've transformed it into something else. At the end of the day there are still child care spaces lacking, and we know one thing that's absolutely critical to get people, in particular single mothers, into the workforce is the availability of affordable child care.

This government is acknowledging that it will spend taxpayers' money in unlicensed, unregulated day care and they will be moving to a system of which all the indicators are there. When we take public money, that is the people's, the taxpayers' money, and allow it to be spent in a system that has no catches, that requires no regulation, no standards — that you would actually use public taxpayers' money for potentially under-the-table funding of day care with individuals who may or may not have a fence in the backyard, adequate facilities to take in children. This is what this government is moving towards. They're doing it and at the same time acknowledging they're going to assist in the child care area. In my opinion and that of my caucus, it is not an appropriate use of public dollars, of taxpayers' money.

They've cut adult education. Here's a government that will acknowledge that education is the key to good, long-lasting jobs in Ontario. Most of the people who would have benefited from the adult education programs we've had in Ontario are those who are on assistance. They've raised tuition fees for colleges and universities — again the very same people who are going to benefit from acquiring other levels of skills or training to meet the job demands that may or may not exist in their communities. They're making them more and more unattainable by raising tuition fees.

Cutting the investment in training programs: Everyone recognized the troubles that Jobs Ontario Training had; everyone acknowledged that it didn't meet the outcomes that were anticipated. But at a minimum you have had governments in the past acknowledge that training is a significant component of moving people from welfare on to the employment rolls.

There are the following instances in social assistance: You will have use, misuse, abuse and fraud. At the outset, abuse and fraud are completely unacceptable. The government has spent millions of dollars, again of taxpayers' money, rooting around for fraud and abuse in

the system. Compared to the amount of money they spent looking for it, they actually found very little evidence of it.

What they did find, I say, was always the government's responsibility to root out, not just because you happen to be going on a witchhunt all of a sudden because it's popular to do so today; it has always been your management job as government to look for abuse and fraud. Not because today you feel like another 1-800 number to satisfy or salve the public; it has always been your job not to allow fraud and abuse in the system, but you've allowed it all this time. After two years in government, you decide to have this little witchhunt to look for more cheats. What do I mean, "all of a sudden"? It has always been your job. Again bungled management, failed managers. You would have an F if this were run like a business. That's more than two ministers I would have fired if I had been in charge, let me tell you.

Most of the cases of misuse that occur in the system truly cannot be attributed to the recipients themselves, but with misuse of the system it's critical to note that those individuals who are managing the system at various levels are making errors. Whether it's errors in judgement or simply paper errors, filing errors, ultimately it's the recipient who suffer because of that. Most cases are due to bureaucratic error when there is misuse. Staff is being downsized.

We heard today all the new employment supports that are going to be available for those with disabilities. That is a wonderful thing. You must take that in the context of a ministry that is being significantly downsized. We have fewer people working in the Comsoc ministry today than there have been in years, yet you have more people. What will happen and already has been happening is that those very same people are overworked, have significant levels of stress and sick time. People are having to do more work on a file because more is being demanded of them by their various bosses at different levels.

A good example of this is inmates collecting welfare. I remember when I was back home in my riding and it was the big story of the day: people in jail getting welfare. The government decided to take that opportunity to use it as an example of, "Gee, isn't the system awful?" I was having a good look at this. Isn't this a good example of complete and utter bungling by the minister? Here is a minister who after two years and some in office, over two years of a Conservative government — and you, the very people who purport you're just going to clean up the act, after two years you've done an absolutely abysmal job. I'd fire you if I had the chance.

**1630**

We agree that ministries should be sharing information with other ministries. The key reason some inmates were still collecting welfare was that ministries were not sharing information. If this was just a new idea, this workfare, just come out of the blue sky, you would expect that maybe they didn't think of everything. But no, the PC government ran an election campaign that started a year before the election, and you talked about workfare. You have had, if you count that year, three years to think about everything, but you didn't think you needed to share information among ministries?

Maybe you should go back to school. Maybe you should go back to take some training in management programs to talk about how critical information sharing is interministerially, because you know that the people in the social services department should be talking to the people in corrections. In fact, if you maintain privacy standards and do it in a very appropriate manner, it is altogether appropriate to control information that relates to receiving assistance and that it should or should not be stopped if someone is an inmate. The point is that it's your own fault, and you can bloody well take the fall for that one, because that was all your doing.

Overall, I have to say that the government is not interested in creating opportunities for people who are on assistance, and in so doing I have to tell you about, and I mentioned earlier, all the punitive measures in the bill. I want the people to understand how significant this is, because this is not just influencing the recipient; this is influencing their dependants and then some. Let me give you a couple of examples here.

"A recipient" — this is on page 7 of the bill — "and any prescribed dependants may be required as a condition of eligibility for basic financial assistance to...participate in employment measures." We're not just talking about an individual; we are also talking about their dependants. There's no clarification here of what age that would be. Would that be their 14-year-old daughter? Would it be their 16-year-old son? Maybe the minister should have laid on the table before we debated this bill regulations that would spell that out. I think that would be a useful exercise.

Let's talk about other punitive measures. "Liens on property." This is very interesting: "An administrator shall in prescribed circumstances, as a condition of eligibility for basic financial assistance, require a recipient or dependant who owns or has an interest in property to consent to the delivery agent having a lien against the property."

We need to understand that we have just moved Ontario from a social assistance program to a loan program. This is not a grant, and it's not assistance; it's a loan that will forever remain on people's property. But it doesn't just say that. It says, "An administrator shall in prescribed circumstances, as a condition of eligibility...require an applicant, a recipient, a dependant or a prescribed person to agree to reimburse the administrator for the assistance to be provided."

Let's take any member here: Mr Klees, who will be speaking later to the bill. Let's say it's his elderly mother, and for some reason his elderly mother is going to receive financial assistance through social welfare. Mr Klees will now be financially responsible for reimbursing the state for all that assistance. I hope he's talking to his mother. That's all I can say. You'd like to think there's a good enough relationship there.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The honourable member is clearly misrepresenting the facts of this legislation. Because I know that my mother is watching, I would hate for her to be distressed at this moment by the implications made by the honourable member. I would ask that she use a different example to illustrate and also to get to the facts of the legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. I don't believe there is anything out of order. First of all, let me say to the member for Windsor-Sandwich that if you feel the member opposite is offended or disturbed by your wording, you have the opportunity to change that. I am just giving you my thoughts here. You have the opportunity to change and make other examples; however, you don't have to.

On the other hand, the member for York-Mackenzie, you must withdraw the accusation that the member for Windsor-Sandwich was misrepresenting the House.

**Mr Klees:** I don't think I can withdraw, because that is not what the legislation —

**The Acting Speaker:** No. I was listening carefully. Let's clear this thing up now. The only thing I'm asking you to withdraw is that you used the word "misrepresenting" and you accused the member of misrepresenting.

**Mr Klees:** I will withdraw that and rephrase to say the member does not fully understand the legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** All you have to do is withdraw.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I would ask you to rule on the point of order that the member for Windsor-Sandwich is not referring to the other member by his riding.

**The Acting Speaker:** You have a good point, member for Mississauga South. I would ask the member for Windsor-Sandwich to refer to the member as the member for York-Mackenzie. I would remind all members they should do that. Thank you.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thank you, Speaker. I will do better than that; I will use my mother as the example. I extend apologies to the member for York-Mackenzie, although you're sitting there and I thought it was convenient.

If my mother required some kind of assistance, the point is that I am beholden now to the government to repay that. The point is, when did Ontario make the determination that we are moving from a truly social assistance community, where we help people who need help on a short-term basis, which is what the program is, to require other prescribed persons to be responsible for that assistance? I am asking you that question. We have just made the most significant move. Do the MPPs in the House understand what a significant move that is?

When we talk about rights of appeal, the minister herself spoke about fairness and wanting fairness in the system. The truth is that in this bill, decisions made by the tribunal are final. There is no right of appeal. I will use the Minister of Transportation as the example. I cannot imagine that this minister would allow himself, in any situation dealing with the law, not to have the opportunity for appeal, or any one of us in the House. All of us expect that under the Ontario Human Rights Code, under all the laws of the land, we have the right to appeal whatever. With Bill 142 they have no right of appeal. I want to tell you that it's not fair.

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: With respect, if the member had read the legislation, she would know there is a clear right of appeal in this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for York-Mackenzie, take your seat. You will have an opportunity to speak later. It is the member's right to speak at this time. You will have your opportunity later.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I don't want to make light of this and I don't want these interruptions unless they're appropriate. This is a very important issue. We are talking about human rights and people's ability to appeal decisions. I am telling you that the bill you are introducing in this House today that you will be speaking to does not allow the very basic right of appeal for individuals who find themselves in certain circumstances. When we have an opportunity to take this bill on the road for public hearings, we will prove that to you.

May I say that this government has been wrong before. May I say that this government has made mistakes before. I am suggesting to you that this is a huge mistake. Not only that, it isn't fair, and we're talking about fairness for people. Since when does the concept of fairness have to be related to what your income levels are?

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Pupatello:** John, for Christ's sake, would you take it seriously?

**1640**

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I know that the member wants to have a meaningful and factual debate of this legislation. I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to recess for 30 minutes so that the member can read the legislation so that she can deal in a factual way with this. Do we have unanimous consent?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** There is not unanimous consent. Member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Pupatello:** That is only one area in terms of right of appeal that is grossly unfair. It is unfair because we are putting conditions on people on the basis of what they earn or what they don't earn. In fact, their financial stability will give them rights as an individual in Ontario or not. All of those quizzical looks — I would suggest to you that Bill 142 will make very good reading this weekend, say, as we prepare to go into hearings, I hope in your community.

Let me tell you that the minister spent some time talking about additional supports regarding employment for those on disability. In this context of massive cuts to the ministry, because the ministry has been continually downsized so we have fewer people who are going to be overseeing these new programs, you have —

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Municipalities.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Yes, you apparently have 50 delivery — of course, we don't know that kind of detail because the minister doesn't want to give us regulations to allow for some kind of meaningful debate. The minister doesn't tell us what the new definition of disability might be —

**Mr Klees:** You haven't read the legislation. Why would you read the regulations?

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for York-Mackenzie, come to order.

**Mrs Pupatello:** — because that is going to be in regulation. We don't want to make it too hot for the minister all at once, do we? How will the ministry afford to pay all of these additional supports to people who will be on disability? There's only one thing we can deduce from that: There will be fewer people on the system. That's how they're going to pay. When you can get over the bar, because they just raised the bar on what they call disabled, they're going to have manna from heaven. If they manage to get over the bar, they will have the kinds of employment supports that are required, that they truly want, to be able to be employable.

But God help us, people, if we are on the margins, if we have the kind of disability that the minister doesn't feel is disabled enough. Because the definition is very clear. It says: "The person has a substantial physical or mental impairment that is continuous or recurrent and expected to last one year or more."

We need to know what "substantial" means. Do we have a medical definition, do we have a psychological definition, a sociological definition? Which doctor do we listen to? Is it the specialist or the family physician or the general practitioner? This is a significant item in the bill because you are telling people today — you will recall the numbers of times that we asked this question in the House: Will there be fewer people after your new definition or will there be more people? The minister refused to answer a very simple question. The minister refused to answer the question.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I didn't. I said there would be more.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Now she's yelling or heckling across the House and saying that there are going to be more people on disability. We asked what the definition would be and what the change would be.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I think that the record needs to be corrected. When the member asked me the question —

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister, order. Take your seat, please. You know that is not a point of order. You will have an opportunity to speak if you feel that the record needs correcting, but that is not a point of order.

**Mrs Pupatello:** The worrisome part is these are the people responsible for children in Ontario. This is the kind of behaviour we see. These are the kinds of bills where their own backbenchers really aren't aware of all the ramifications of the bill. You don't know what effect it's going to have on children in Ontario, but you're prepared to sit here and support it blindly.

Let me tell you, we're going to have a lot to learn in this House as we go forward because we asked the minister very specifically, "After the new bill is passed, will there be more people on disability or will there be less?" I have yet to hear an answer to that question because the answer is there will be less.

We have a ministry with less funding, and yet you're offering all of these additional supports. The only way that will happen physically — unless you have some magic potion that I'm not yet aware of, there will be fewer people on the system. So you will be moving people off.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services cannot just look at its own little area in isolation or like you're one little silo. It doesn't work that way. We have people who are on FBA or GWA or whatever those systems were called who are now going to be in Ontario Works.

Before we got to that place, you recall, the Ministry of Education made some pretty significant changes. They decided that the people who were going to go to school weren't going to get family benefits any more, they were going to be put on OSAP. Let me give you a scenario that was put to me very clearly and very succinctly and really proves the point.

We have a mother of four young children. After her husband left her with no support, she was on the system, requiring assistance. She needs to go back to school because she recognized and was told that she really had to upgrade her skills in order to get back into the workforce at a meaningful job that actually would pay appropriate supports for her and her children.

Because of the changes, she went to her case worker. Under this new mandate by those above, namely, at Queen's Park, saying, "Get them off the system; we want them off the system because we are driving our welfare rates down," this individual was put on OSAP.

Here's someone who has not managed her own affairs, ever, four children at home, returning to school. She has now been handed a cheque for $42,000 in OSAP loans. This is a loan system. First we had the person in the old system receiving assistance, but now here's an individual who has probably never managed more than $5,000 at a time being responsible for a $42,000 loan.

As it was put to me so well, let's see what happens here. The case worker is going "Ch-ching, I just reduced my welfare roll and that's what I'm supposed to do under the Mike Harris government." The bank manager is thrilled. He's going, "Ch-ching," because he just got to write a $42,000 loan. The school that is accepting this student is saying, "Ch-ching, I just got a new student and guaranteed tuition paid."

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Will you spell that for Hansard.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Please, I'm talking here if you don't mind. So every single individual who has to deal with this woman is pleased. They're all saying "Ch-ching." In the end we have a $42,000 loan —

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't believe anyone in this House understands the word "Ch-ching." If we could have an explanation, if it's relevant to the debate, I think we all should know what it means.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Point of privilege, Speaker: I don't want to take up any more time than necessary but it looks like it's not going to stop. I want to say, as a member who is not in opposition of this member, in a different opposition party, not in the government, that it's unfair that government backbenchers continue over and over on the same point of order. You know you can't correct someone else's record. You're infringing on my privileges. Speaker, please do more than you are and stop this. It's unfair.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, when a member in the House rises on a point of order or privilege, I have to recognize that member to find out whether it's legitimate or not. I would ask all members to come to order and to exercise a little bit more common sense, if I may use that phrase, at this time.

*Interjections.*

**1650**

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thanks. My only aim is to make sure that the people who might actually be listening to what positions we have here would clearly understand that "Ch-ching" means they just won big time, because the FBA case worker who is following the case has managed to clear another file off the desk. The bank just managed to secure another loan at interest-rate charges. Mike Harris is thrilled because he can go around and tout her as a perfect example of "moving her off the welfare system."

The reality is that the first thing this individual did was to go out and spend $12,000 to finally buy furniture that their home had never had. I am asking the public, who is responsible for this? Yes, the individual has some responsibility to be responsible. Does the government which has enacted all of this not carry some sense of responsibility that the likelihood of that loan being repaid is not high, that the schooling that individual will receive is going to be exactly what that individual needs to get back into the workforce, but because the government has decided that is just not their mandate any more, there is no one who is going to follow up? There is no one who should have sat down and said, "Okay now, $12,000 on furniture is just not a good idea here." Whose responsibility is it?

While we sit and listen to the platitudes and the new rhetoric the minister puts forward, I'm worried about people who for all kinds of good reasons aren't making good decisions or wise ones. Somebody has got to be responsible for them too. The sooner we all realize that there will always be some people in Ontario who really need some help, the better off we're all going to be, because I think we judge our societies on how we treat our children and the people who are most in need. I believe that on that score you are failing miserably.

I'm embarrassed to be here while you bring in this kind of bill. It's an affront to people who want to do right by other people, and I think you should be embarrassed. I don't want you to sit there and sing it to people as though it's something you're proud of when the thing doesn't have a hope in hell of working, and you knew it; you were told it and you were given all kinds of examples of that but you still didn't change. You just went rolling right along. I'll hate to be proven right on this but I'm sorry, there's all kinds of documentation that tells me that's what is going to happen.

If you speak solely from a municipal financial perspective, you have a responsibility to go and tell your 50 new delivery agents across Ontario exactly what's in store for them. There are people out there like the mayor of Belleville, who is admittedly a good Tory — I think the whole world knows that — and he doesn't know. He doesn't know the half of what's coming to him in term of the costs he is going to assume. None of the municipalities know. In my own city of Windsor they are now looking at a minimum 15% increase. That's only based on information they know. They don't know about the rest.

Your fingerprinting system is going to be hugely expensive, but you're giving half of that cost away to every city and town that will be delivering the service.

Your new computer system, which you have to have in order to properly enact the things you think you are going to do, is going to cost a fortune, but now you are downloading 50% of that administrative cost to those cities and towns that are going to be delivering the program. The last time we talked about what it takes in terms of moneys to change a whole system, the figures were around $1 billion. It's not fair of you to do this in the dark. It's not fair that you didn't go to municipalities and talk about how you administrate this when they are going to be ultimately responsible and paying 50% of it. It isn't fair, and when you brought in the bill you said it was supposed to be fair. Let me tell you, folks, it is not fair.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Hamilton East.

**Mr Agostino:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to —

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: When are you doing the Q and A?

**The Acting Speaker:** The time has been split here by unanimous consent. Member for Hamilton East, continue.

**Mr Agostino:** I want to commend my colleague from Windsor-Sandwich for outlining clearly many of the flaws that are in the bill and clearly outlining the agenda of this government when it comes to welfare reform.

This government treats welfare reform as if it is something new. This government figures that they have somehow found this magic solution, this very simple solution to welfare reform, and that solution is to beat up on the poor. That is frankly how you plan to reform the system.

If you will recall, up to 1985 there had been some efforts in welfare reform. Frankly, not a great deal had occurred; there had been some stagnation. There had been a period of over 42 years in this province where not any really significant welfare reform had taken place. Between 1985 and 1990 a government came to power that undertook — not perfectly by any stretch of the imagination, not able to fix the system completely, but that made some significant strides in reforming and fixing the welfare system that had been out of date for 30 or 40 years.

Between 1990 and 1995 an NDP government came to power, and again in that area made some significant strides towards fixing a system that wasn't working.

In less than two years you have stripped all that away. In less than two years you have taken away from Ontario what it has taken 15 or 20 years of governments of all three political stripes to build: a caring, compassionate, fair welfare system. Not that it didn't need help and fixing, not that it didn't need adjustment, not that it didn't need reform; of course it did. But a welfare system that you want to reform cannot be based on a punitive approach, and that's what you have taken.

If you look at the history of what you have done — and I realize what it was driven by — it was driven by your focus groups. It was driven by your public opinion polls. It was driven by the whiz kids in the Premier's office who said: "You know what? If we go out there and beat up on the poor, if we go out there and beat up on the needy, if we go out there and beat up on single moms, there are political points to be scored." It is the most divisive, mean type of politics one can play. It is the old politics of simply adding by subtracting: "You know what? It's okay. It's okay if we lose those folks. It's okay if those folks don't vote for us. We're punishing them, but you know what? There are going to be a whole bunch of others on the other side who will vote for us because they like what we're doing to welfare recipients; they like what we're doing to single moms."

Your first action as a government was to proceed to cut 22% of the benefits to welfare recipients. Why did you do that? Did you do it because you felt that those 400,000 kids who were relying on welfare were somehow living in the lap of luxury? Did you feel that those 400,000 kids who were relying on welfare maybe had an extra pair of shoes to go to school or an extra coat that you wanted to take away from them? Is that why you cut their benefits by 22%? What other rationale is there? What other rationale is there to come in and slash benefits by 22% to 400,000 kids?

Of course, politically it made sense for you. Again, it bought into your constituency; again, the public opinion polls looked great. So you came in and said: "We're going to reform the welfare system. The first thing is that we believe welfare recipients are lazy and need a kick in the butt, so we're going to give them that kick in the butt by cutting their benefits." Then you realized that all of a sudden those people couldn't make ends meet. You realized they couldn't pay their rent, you realized they couldn't feed their kids, so what did your minister at that time suggest? "Well, you know, there's an answer to this. We've cut your benefits, but you can make do. You know how you can do that? Buy dented tuna for 69 cents a can, and you know what? That will help you make up the 22% we cut from you. That's part of the answer. Or we'll give you a budget." The minister at that time suggested a $90-a-month food budget was going to take care of a single mom with a couple of kids. That was your answer to the welfare problem in Ontario: punitive.

Think. Go back to the exploitation. The exploitation didn't start simply with the Common Sense Revolution. Let me remind you that your leader, at that time the leader of the third party, Mike Harris, made the disgraceful performance of bringing out a woman who had a job and advising her to quit her job to prove a point about the welfare system. That was the start of the disgraceful beating up of welfare recipients that your government undertook. We all remember that. Mike Harris's facts were all wrong, of course, as time showed, but he trots this woman out and says: "Here, tell them how rich our welfare system is. You were making $40,000 a year and now you've quit your job and you are better off." That was a load of crap and it backfired on you badly because very clearly within a day or two the real numbers came out and you saw the fact that it wasn't true.

**1700**

**Mrs Boyd:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: For some time the clock was doing the regular time rather than the time on his speech. I don't know how long it was going, but I do know the Clerk just caught it and I do not know whether it was doing a simultaneous countdown for the member, but there may be a problem with timing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary Leadston):** I'm advised that it will adjust chronologically. It does flip over, but it does accurately record the time for the member.

**Mrs Boyd:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Continue.

**Mr Agostino:** As I said earlier, we'll remember that. None of you will stand up and be proud of that today, will you? None of you will think Mike Harris did a great thing by bringing forward this individual and suggesting to the whole province that if you have a job, quit your job and go on welfare. That was Mike Harris, the welfare fighter at that time, but that started this pattern of exploitation towards the needy and the poor in Ontario. It is shameful because you know you are hurting people.

Governments sometimes makes mistakes. All governments of all political stripes have made mistakes in legislation, but I cannot think of a government in recent memory in this province or anywhere in this country that has intentionally and knowingly set out to exploit and hurt people for political gain as you have with the poor and the needy and welfare recipients across Ontario. That is a legacy that's going to haunt you time and time again.

You may gain some short-term political points on this. You'll get some hot buttons from it that you'll be able to push whenever you're down in the polls, as we did today. Your numbers are starting to drop, so your minister goes off and does some "Workfare's wonderful" announcement in Burlington this morning. You just pull them out, trot them out and say: "Here we go. Hey, we like workfare. Our numbers go up again." It is simply a cheap, sleazy exploitation of the needy and it's something you're going to regret. You folks have to go to bed at night, you have to be able to sleep and look at yourselves in the mirror the next morning and think of what you've done to these kids in Ontario.

Think if it's acceptable in Ontario today to have kids who are dependent on the welfare system do with 22% less and think if that is good public policy. Think if that is a good start for these kids. Think if that is a start you want the young people in this province to have. Think of those parents who are struggling for the coat or that pair of shoes because you have cut their benefits by 22%. That is what has set the pattern to what we're moving towards and to Bill 142. What do you do after that?

Then we had the regulation mistake by the minister: an order that was published in the Gazette that would in effect have cut 100,000 disabled people off benefits. When did you retrench and retract? When the opposition brought it to your attention in the House, and the minister said it was a drafting error — a regulation that went through cabinet, that went through and was published in the Gazette as a law of the province of Ontario that would have cut 100,000 people off. You only retrenched when you were embarrassed and forced to do it. That is part of the legacy of this government.

Then you decided to cut the agencies that serve the poor. Those agencies were way too wealthy. Social workers making $16,000 were overpaid. Dealing with kids in crisis, dealing with families in crisis, they were overpaid. How dare they make $16,000 a year doing social work. You'll fix them. So you've cut the funding to the agencies so they have to either pay less or let go of these workers. That was great. That was progressive. That was helping the needy.

Not only have you taken their benefits away, not only have you hurt them and hurt their kids, you then proceeded to cut the agencies that help these people at a time when the need would have been the greatest, where the need would have increased. You decided you were going to basically cut away that short lifeline that agencies could provide the people. You did that shamelessly because it was a cheap, sleazy political point and exploitation of the needy, and you felt that was acceptable because it helped you in the public opinion polls. That is the legacy of this government when it comes to social services.

Then of course we had workfare. The great Common Sense Revolution brought us workfare. I challenge members of this government to show me any jurisdiction across North America where workfare has created one new job for a welfare recipient, where workfare has helped people get back to work. Again, it is an exploitation.

And you know what? Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin loves you for it because that's what they do there. John Engler in Michigan will tell you it's a great program. It is a great agenda of the right-wing Republican governors of the United States of America to continue to tout workfare.

The money you've put into workfare you could have put into meaningful programs that help people to get back to work. Nobody is suggesting to welfare recipients that if they can get into programs that are meaningful and helpful they should not get into those programs, but simply being forced to do 17 hours, 15 hours or 20 hours a week of volunteer work to make you feel good is not meaningful return-to-work programming. It simply makes you feel good. You can point out one or two letters and I'll give you 100 letters on the other side that show you how destructive it's been to people and that it does absolutely nothing to help.

But you know what? It makes you feel good. You can pound your chest and say: "We're getting those bums back to work. We're forcing them to work." It makes you feel good and it scores cheap, sleazy political points once again for your government. That's why the minister this morning trotted out to Burlington saying, "Today in workfare we're back in three months." If your numbers don't go up in the polls, we'll have another announcement somewhere else and you'll give us another update on workfare. There was nothing substantial this morning, but it was simply a public relations exercise to help drag up your sagging public opinion numbers. You used that button and you continue to push it.

But you know what? Workfare has not had the impact you thought it would have because municipalities, first of all, have been forced into participating. You've blackmailed them. You've held a gun to their heads. You have given them bribe money. Simply, you have legalized the art of extortion. You've said to municipalities: "You must participate in this, and if you do not participate in this program, we're going to simply withdraw your funding. We're going to withhold grants. You're not going to get this extra support."

What you have done is you've forced municipalities to participate in programs they didn't want to participate in, but you have not been able to force many of the agencies because many of the agencies in this province that are in the business of helping the needy saw through your agenda and they've said to you: "We are in the business of helping the needy. We're not going to participate in the business of exploiting the needy." Therefore, your numbers are not there.

You have never given us estimates. You've trumpeted this program. You have set targets for everything else, but you've never set these targets for workfare. You have simply made a moving target that you can shift any time you want. You now have incorporated existing programs — talk about a hoax. You now have taken existing programs that municipalities have run for years

successfully and you've incorporated that as part of your Ontario Works program. That's part of your workfare and you're taking credit for those numbers. There were thousands and thousands of Ontarians who were involved in meaningful programs, retraining programs, skills programs, literacy upgrading. Before you brought along workfare those programs were working.

The region of Hamilton-Wentworth had a program called Helping Hands. That program dealt with hard-to-employ individuals, individuals who have alcohol and drug problems, individuals who have had a very difficult work history. They took those individuals and they've put them through a very systematic, very structured, very reasonable type of program, and that success rate went 60% to 70% before workfare came along. But they were able to work with those individuals. They weren't simply forced to say, "You all must be involved in the program and we're going to put you through like cattle because it looks good on our numbers." They were able to work with these individuals.

What did those programs do? Those programs involved classroom upgrading, résumé writing skills, job interview skills, hands-on work experience, helping seniors and the disabled, but again they were willing participants in programs that fit their need. They weren't simply shoved into programs or had to be threatened to have their benefits cut off.

You fail to understand that before you even came to power, before you felt that all of a sudden you had to revolutionize the welfare system, there was a provision under the general welfare act that allowed the case workers to suspend benefits of anybody who refused a reasonable or meaningful work or training program. That was already there and it gave the worker the discretion and the flexibility to deal with individual clients as the need arose.

Somehow you made it look as if all these individuals were sitting at home doing nothing. You tell me. I challenge any member across the floor to explain to me how workfare helps the 50-year-old laid-off steelworker or construction worker in my riding who has worked for 30 or 35 years of their life and now is forced on welfare because of the economic situation. You tell me why the 50-year-old steelworker or construction worker in my riding must participate in your workfare program in some meaningless feel-good activity. Why? How does that help that individual? How does that help self-dignity? This is a person who has been in the workforce 30 or 35 years, has never had a problem, except now we have an employment problem. That's why that individual is on welfare, but you're going to force that person into workfare.

**1710**

The minister, when he made the announcement, talked about painting park benches and cleaning up parks and picking up rocks. That is meaningful welfare reform? That is workfare? No, but it's cheap, sleazy political points. Again I say to you, show me how many new jobs have been created as a result of workfare.

You try to fool the public into believing there are savings in workfare. What you fail to understand is that the public is going to start seeing through that. They're realizing that when you have someone on workfare, first of all they are getting their benefits, reduced as they are, but there's a significant cost to the administration and operation of that workfare for that individual, which adds to the welfare costs in Ontario.

You take credit for the numbers and you say workfare is working; the welfare numbers have dropped. Let me tell you why the welfare numbers have dropped. The first thing you did when you cut their benefits by 22% was you also cut the threshold that people could earn while they were still working part-time. You reduced that eligibility, so you automatically wiped thousands of people off the welfare system. Those people are no better off today than they were yesterday, but once you made that regulation change they were no longer eligible and they were no longer on welfare according to their needs. That's one of the reasons.

You took 15,000 or 20,000 individuals who were receiving assistance in post-secondary education and shifted them all to OSAP. Again, that knocked 15,000 or 20,000 people off the welfare rolls. Bingo. Simple. A regulation change and they're gone. They're no longer on welfare, folks. They're off and they're rich and they're doing well again because you made a regulation change. Those are the types of initiatives you have undertaken, and somehow you believe it has been your workfare program that has helped this.

You talk about fraud. What did you do for the first two years? You instituted a 1-800 number. We did not see any meaningful welfare fraud reform by this government for the first two years. You had a 1-800 number that made you feel good. The numbers have shown that welfare fraud, even through your 1-800 number, is still what people said it was before: 3% to 4%. It has not gone up. Let me suggest to you that 3% or 4% is unacceptable. However, compared to any other system — compared to your taxation system, compared to income tax, compared to GST or PST — it is not any worse, and let me suggest to you that the rate is lower.

But you're not going to go after that, are you? You're not going to go after people who are avoiding the PST, because that's not in your best interests. You're not going to go after people who are avoiding income tax, because it's not in your best interests. But it's politically acceptable and it's a political winner to go after welfare recipients. All this is part of your legacy. All this is part of the history.

I recall when this government couldn't explain where all these people on welfare had gone. Every month the numbers would drop, but the employment numbers wouldn't change and numbers went up in the food banks and in the shelters, in the homeless. You couldn't explain what happened, so what you did is you went out and issued a survey. This had to be a classic government manipulation of numbers and exploitation of welfare

recipients. You went out and issued a survey and you tried to contact over 4,000 welfare recipients.

You came back with this high-paid consultant's report and you said: "You know what? Fifty per cent of these people are now working. That's what our survey told us." As we looked more closely at the numbers, it revealed that of the 4,000 you tried to reach, over 2,000 you couldn't reach because they didn't have a phone that was working. Of the 2,000 you reached, less than half were either working in part-time or full-time employment of some type. So the real numbers were significantly less than you had suggested.

It's like taking a survey of income in a neighbourhood but only counting houses that have Cadillacs in the driveway, and saying, "Here's the level of income in this neighbourhood." You exclude the homes that don't have cars at all or have a beaten-up old car in the driveway, and you count the ones that have the Caddy in the driveway. That's exactly what you did with your survey, and now you tout that number, that somehow 50% of the welfare recipients who are off welfare are working. That is a fraud. It is wrong, and you know it is, but you continue to exploit that; you continue to use that.

Now we see what I think will be the final piece in Bill 142. Not only do you change the system in a way, and I'll talk about it in a few minutes, that I don't think is going to help recipients, but you have taken it a step further. You have now moved to a system that strips the basic dignity and rights of welfare recipients. Bill 142 will strip any dignity and any rights that welfare recipients had. Anything you left in the last two years as you went on to beat them up and kick them in the head and exploit them, Bill 142 takes away.

You have significantly curtailed the appeals program. There will still be some token appeals. What did you do? There was a Social Assistance Review Board that generally worked fairly well over the years. You couldn't change that initially, so you stacked that board with a bunch of your right-wing, anti-welfare-recipient friends, and therefore anybody who appealed was basically shafted anyway. So you bought yourself some time. You now have moved to an appeals tribunal system that is very difficult to access, is very restrictive to people. So technically you still have an appeals system, but in reality that appeals system doesn't work; in reality that appeals system is not going to serve anyone.

We used to allow people to receive interim assistance while they were appealing because we realized there were situations where the appeals were successful and people were in dire need. Because of that we gave them assistance. If the appeal was unsuccessful, the welfare system would reclaim that and recover that money. You now have taken that part of it away from this legislation, so you're saying, "If you've been wronged, while you're appealing it's tough. You just sit at home and wait and wait and wait. If you do qualify under our strict criteria, we'll listen to your appeal, and if you're successful, then we'll give you your money." What happens in those months and months in between when that's happening? You have taken that away.

What is even more offensive in what you have done here is your idea, any way you want to mask it — the minister can call it electronic scanning, call it whatever you want. The reality is that you are on the way to introducing fingerprinting for welfare recipients in Ontario. It is that simple.

It was interesting when you first brought it out that the Premier talked in a scrum about doing it for all of Ontario, some sort of universal system. As soon as the public got wind of that and the backlash came, you backed away from that so quickly it was amazing. Flip-flop Mike moved so fast to back away from that position, but you have stuck to fingerprinting welfare recipients. What rationale is there to fingerprint welfare recipients in Ontario? Is it simply to label them? Is it simply to add to the stigma you have created? It doesn't cut welfare fraud. What you're doing is you're equating in the public's mind receiving social assistance with being a criminal. We only fingerprint criminals in our society in most cases.

There are circumstances of employment where people have a choice. In welfare, you don't have that choice. People are on welfare because of need. People do not choose to go on welfare. Contrary to what many members across the floor may believe, people do not choose to live the life of luxury as a single person at $520 a month. People do not choose the wonderful life that when you pay $400 or $450 for your rent, which doesn't get you an apartment in downtown Toronto, you then have $70 left for the rest of the month. I'm not sure how many people would choose that life of luxury that you're suggesting people are exploiting and using, but you're going to fingerprint them now.

I go back to the laid-off steelworker or the laid-off construction worker in my riding. You're going to say to this individual, "Because you are in need, given the fact that you've worked for 30 years and your savings are gone and UI's gone and you can't get another job because of your age and economic conditions and so on, first of all we're going to put you into workfare, but before we do that, we're going to fingerprint you." We're going to say to the laid-off steelworker or construction worker in my riding, "We are going to fingerprint you," because that helps cut down on the 3% fraud you're talking about. Why are you doing that? What evidence is there anywhere to show that fingerprinting welfare recipients cuts down on welfare fraud? Absolutely none, not one shred of evidence anywhere that shows that.

**1720**

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it's important for the person who has the floor to refer to finger scanning, not fingerprinting. That's totally inaccurate.

**The Acting Speaker:** In my humble opinion, you could probably use both.

**Mr Agostino:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. You can phrase it any way you want, you can use all the buzz-

words you want, you can use all the scripts that the whiz kids in the Premier's office have given you to use to sugarcoat this. The reality is that at the end of the day, if you have your way and you continue to do this, you're simply going to fingerprint every single welfare recipient in Ontario. That's how simple it is. Call it anything you want. You can use any buzzword you want to describe it; you're not going to fool the public. When you force people to go there and do that, people know they're being fingerprinted. It is that simple, it is that obvious. You're doing it because politically it sounds good, because politically it scores you points.

As I mentioned earlier, nobody is suggesting that programs that work to help welfare recipients get back to work should not be used. Nobody is suggesting that. Let me tell you very clearly, we must take every opportunity to help people get off welfare and into the workforce, but it's got to be done on the basis of reasonable, fair programs that work, not simply what you're doing here today. Bill 142 continues to add to that.

Then you've redefined "disability." From the regulations we've seen, the few details we've been given, we see that this is going to be much more restrictive. We see very clearly that what you're going to do is in effect hurt people who should be getting disability benefits and aren't going to be. You've redefined it. You've taken the area of addiction, that has long been recognized — it has become more and more recognized today in the medical field, the psychological field, that many forms of addiction are a disability. For people who are addicted to certain substances, often their life is so impaired, their way of functioning is so chronically impaired that they can't work. But you're going to make it almost impossible for anyone who has an addiction to be deemed disabled.

As difficult as it is and as much as we like to blame the victim, I would ask any of you to talk to those who have individuals in their family who may have chronic alcohol problems. Ask them if that is an addiction problem, if that is a problem that often makes it difficult, in severe cases, for someone to be able to work, to maintain employment and do the daily duties that are required in a work setting. There are many people who are in that situation, unfortunately, and as a result of your redefinition you are now going to get rid of that. You are not going to make it almost impossible for these individuals.

That's not the first attack you have made on people who have addictions. You in this government snuck through a regulation change about a year or a year and a half ago where individuals — and this is something you should be ashamed of, because you have affected thousands of people, particularly women. It used to be, under the previous system, that when an individual went into an addiction treatment program in a place like Mary Ellis House in Hamilton, as an example, went in for alcohol or addiction treatment in a residential program, they could still continue to receive welfare assistance while they were in the treatment program, for the few months they were in there. For three months, six months, eight months, whatever time they may have been in that program, they could still receive assistance so they could maintain their apartment and so they could carry on with their life once they got out.

You changed that. You changed that system. You snuck through a regulation change that said that if an individual — and most of the people affected that I'm aware of are women in particular programs. If anyone goes into a residential treatment program, automatically their welfare is cut off. What does that mean for these women? That means these women have to choose between treatment for their addiction in a residential setting or, on the other hand, losing their benefits. You've forced them to choose between having to give up their apartment, give up their benefits, or go into a program.

How does that help? How has that regulation change helped women who are trying to get help for their addiction? Most, 90%, of the individuals who are affected by this change, are women. How does that help? Explain to me how asking a women to choose between giving up her support, her apartment, her assistance, or going into a treatment program — if you choose to go into a treatment program, you come out after six months. You may no longer have the addiction, but you have no apartment, you have no furniture, you have no home, you have no support system. That's what you force them to do. This redefinition is going to make that situation even greater and it's going to make it even more chronic for these individuals who are trying to get some help.

What has been amazing through this as well has been that many of the concerns — you have consulted to some degree. You have consulted with individuals in the disabled community, you have consulted with a number of groups out there with regard to the redefinition. You have done some consultation in that area, but you have failed to consult with groups, consumers out there with regard to this slew of changes you've made here. You have not consulted with municipalities, on to which you're going to download a tremendous amount of these costs. You have not consulted with individuals who represent welfare recipients. You have not consulted with municipal social services departments that have to carry out the programs that you now have imposed on them.

Have you consulted with seniors' groups? Do you realize that as part of the changes now you're going to force people who are 60 to 64 years of age into workfare programs as you expand this, with the definition you have here? You're going to force 60-year-olds into workfare programs. Think about this for a second. You're going to force a 63-year-old woman or man into workfare in return for receiving assistance until they turn 65. What benefit is there to that individual at that age who is receiving assistance to be involved in workfare? Absolutely none, except that it makes you feel really good.

That is what this legislation is all about. You have taken away the basic democratic principles that welfare recipients to some degree have enjoyed up until now. You have chosen to continue to attack them. I find it extremely

offensive. One can agree or disagree with the meaning of welfare reform, one can agree or disagree with specific parts of legislation you bring forward, but what I find extremely offensive is how you have gone about very systematically beating up on people in Ontario, how you have continued to go after individuals whom you didn't consider part of your core support, people whom you felt weren't really part of the Ontario you represented.

Kids have a tough time speaking for themselves. The 400,000 kids that you've cut off welfare have a hell of a tough time coming forward and telling you how they've been hurt by this. Single moms who are struggling to get by and taking care of two or three kids have a hell of a tough time organizing lobby groups to come and speak to you. They don't have access to your cocktail parties. They don't have access to the Albany Club. They don't have access to your fundraisers on golf courses across Ontario. Somehow single moms have a tough time getting into that. I don't know why, but somehow they have a tough time hiring a lobbyist to come and speak to the government on their behalf. Somehow it's just out of the realm of possibility. You can't imagine.

Let me tell you, as much as you think you're representing the majority of your constituents, I think you have a special responsibility, and I appeal to your sense of fairness that you have a special responsibility, that we all have a special responsibility to look after people who cannot look after themselves in this province.

**1730**

Big business from time to time needs government assistance, but you know what? Generally big business can take care of itself. High-powered lawyers, high-powered investment companies, Bay Street generally can get by without the protection of government. That responsibility falls especially on us who have to find it within ourselves to put aside what we believe is strictly politically right from the point of view of what our pollsters are telling us and do what is right for Ontarians. Somehow you fail to grasp that. You fail to grasp the fact that you are hurting people. You may sugarcoat it nicely. You have a minister now who certainly is able to spin the message much better than the previous minister. Your spin doctors are hard at work. You have Jan Dymond and others in the background telling you exactly what you have to say — at good fees and continued consulting contracts that are open-ended for you.

You hire Andersen Consulting at hundreds of millions of dollars and say to them, "The more people you help us get off the system, the more money you're going to make." It's not based on need. Your vision of welfare reform is not based on: "What is the need of the recipient. How do we help the recipient?" Your vision of welfare reform is, "How do we score the best, cheapest political points?" How do you score the most points? You hit the hot buttons, right? And you did it through the election, did it well.

I'll give you credit. The hot-button politics you have mastered. You have made it into a fine art. Murphy and the other Republican consultants came down and told you what you should be doing, the masters of the Willie Hortons and other great Republican ads of the past. They came down and told you guys exactly what you should do in the last election, and you mastered that. You hit all the hot buttons. You went after visible minorities. You went after welfare recipients. You went after the disabled. You went after the poor. What rationale was there except, as I say again, cheap, sleazy political exploitation at its worst?

You may win in the short run. In the short run you may feel there is a benefit to be gained by what you're doing, and in the short run, you may score points in your riding and your constituents will call you and say, "Yes, stick it to those folks." But I ask you to tell every one of those individuals who may call your office and say, "Stick it to those welfare recipients," to look at themselves and say, "How would I want to be treated if I was in that situation?" How would those individuals want the government, the social service agencies, to treat them if they were in a situation where they needed social assistance?

If you look at the demographics and the numbers, the face of welfare in the late 1980s and into the 1990s changed dramatically. The vast majority of people who came on to the system came on as a result of layoffs, as a result of economic conditions, as a result of moving from full-time to part-time work, and most people who were on the system were not on the system a long time. You fail to realize that, that most people who are on welfare are not on that long. It's moving all the time, shifting. People come on and go off the system. That is the reality. You fail to acknowledge that. Yes, you'll point to the 5% or 10% of chronic welfare recipients you like to refer to, but that does not reflect most welfare recipients. I challenge you to look at the numbers. Instead of simply continuing with the hate literature you put out every time you bring forward a piece of welfare legislation, I ask you to look at the numbers, to look at the demographics and the makeup of welfare recipients in Ontario and realize how you are hurting them.

You want to talk about workfare? I ask you to produce some numbers. Don't tell me how many people are not on the system any more, because that number is flawed and there is no real explanation. Tell me how many jobs you plan to create as a result of workfare. Do you think that's fair? You're spending hundreds of millions on this program. Do you think you owe the people of Ontario an explanation: "We're going to spend $200 million or $300 million or $400 million over the lifetime of this program, and here's how many jobs we plan to create as a result"? Tell the people of Ontario how many placements you expect so they can gauge your success. You have failed to do that. The minister has not come forward yet and said, "We expect X people to be on workfare by such-and-such a time," so people can gauge your success, can gauge whether the $100 million or $125 million that you plan to spend in your first year on workfare is money well spent.

I challenge you to come forward and give us those numbers. I challenge the government to show us where these individuals who are off the system have gone. I know your survey told us 50% —

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** No, 73%.

**Mr Agostino:** — once you forgot the 2,000 you couldn't get hold of, and you forgot to tell us about those who had no phone whom you couldn't reach and conveniently excluded from your survey. You forgot to tell us that. But I ask the minister, as she is heckling across the floor, to tell us how many people she plans to have on workfare by the end of the year, how many people she expects to get jobs through workfare. I hope that tomorrow or the next day she will come back and give us those numbers, because then we have a standard to gauge you by, we have some measurement.

You had no hesitation in setting your job targets, which you're not going to meet, of 750,000 people, but you don't seem to be able to tell us how many people you're going to get into workfare. If you did that, if you told us and set some targets, you would be held accountable for that, and as you were being held accountable for that, you would also then expect that the public would have a very difficult time buying into your agenda.

As I wrap up, I hope this government comes to its senses. I hope this government understands that meaningful welfare reform is important but that there is more than just "mean" in "meaningful." You have taken the first four letters, you have taken the word "mean," and applied that to welfare reform. Ontario is too good a province, too compassionate a province, too caring a province to be led down the road by your vicious, cruel attack on the needy in this province.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments? The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I thank you, Mr Speaker, and just as important, I thank both the member for Windsor-Sandwich and of course our last speaker, the member for Hamilton East. Both showed a great deal of courage in calling it like it is with this scheme, this vile attempt of the government in its style of shoot to kill to hit the marginalized and to take the tradeoff, which is a handful of votes. It's so easy. The bill is entitled Ontario Works, and it's not even two pages long. The devil is in the regulations. The devil is in the detail.

Anyone at any time can impact and impact again, can hit the marginalized, when it suits their purpose, when the climate turns in their favour. We don't see the same consistency when it comes to recommendations from the Provincial Auditor, when Revenue Canada tells us that when we're talking about fraud, some members of the business community, by way of opportunities, by way of loopholes, are charging all kinds of chits, all kinds of receipts, to defraud the rest of the taxpayers of their rightful share. Nobody goes against them. You don't go against the chamber of commerce because it's not done. They can charge all the meals they wish, exaggerate their car mileage, and the percentage of those who do — not all of them, only a minority — is larger than the single mothers on welfare. Half the people on social assistance are children who don't have a voice, cannot defend themselves. Yet the government loves it, cannot pass the seduction, cannot say no to the lure to hit those who can least defend themselves.

**1740**

**Mrs Marland:** We certainly have had some entertaining debate from the Liberal members this afternoon. I want to clarify right away for the member for Windsor-Sandwich that although she has chosen to tell the public one fact, it is not in the bill that appeals will not be allowed. We don't need to spend any more time clarifying that. If she chooses to continue to tell the public something else, it is very unfortunate. It would be appropriate if, when preparing to debate a bill of this magnitude, the opposition critics would at least read the bill thoroughly.

The same member talked about this government rooting around for fraud. You'd better believe that this government is responsible for doing what the Provincial Auditor identified when the Liberals were the government and when the NDP were the government, and that is in excess of $700 million in fraud in welfare in this province. For over a period of nine years the Provincial Auditor came back every time and said, "There is fraud in the welfare system."

I'm amazed that anyone can stand in this House and argue against reforming the welfare system. It's very interesting, in fact, that the member for Hamilton East in his campaign literature said, "Welfare reform: ensuring that people who are able to work, do work." That is exactly what this government is doing. The more money we save from fraud and misuse of the welfare system, the more money we will have to help those people who are truly in need in this province.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I would just like to commend the members for Windsor-Sandwich and Hamilton East for taking a very close look at what the bill is actually doing in terms of getting some of the facts on the table. As we mentioned a good number of times here today, it would have been much, much easier to have a close examination had the minister brought forth the regulations and shown us what was really in the bill and what would be up for review at this time. But as we know, we have a two-page bill in front of us that can be altered and rearranged through the regulations and something that of course will certainly bring on further debate.

I think what the government is doing in showing their true colours in the House here in bringing forth this bill is that they're ignoring the people who are most affected by this piece of legislation, of course that being the children. As has been indicated a good number of times, these are the people who cannot come out and vote, who cannot put forth their views in that manner. This government continues to ignore the fact that those are the people we should be concerned about here today in the Legislature, those are the folks in the province who are going to be most affected by this piece of legislation.

When we talk about the creation of jobs through assistance and having the people on assistance go to jobs, we have to be concerned about the people they're replacing. I personally was approached by folks who are out clearing snowmobile trails today. The minister stands up and says these people will replace them. Where will the replaced people go? That was their question to me, and that will certainly be a question I'll bring forth as we move into this legislation. But again I want to commend the members for bringing forth a very, very good argument on this piece of legislation.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I want to commend the members for Windsor-Sandwich and Hamilton East for their comments today and reinforce some of what they said.

First of all with respect to the measures on fraud, I was a member of the standing committee on public accounts that looked at the auditor's report. The report clearly indicated that every year the Ontario government is defrauded $2 billion by the business sector in this province. That's a problem this government should worry about. We've got a hotline for welfare and a hotline so you can snitch on WCB recipients. Why doesn't this government put a hotline in to deal with the $2 billion of fraud carried out annually by businesses and business people in this province? Then we'd really be getting at a serious problem.

The second thing that's in this legislation that you should be disgusted about is the fact that you are going to fingerprint welfare recipients. Most people in this province associate fingerprinting with criminal activity. It's a bloody disgrace that you would put in something like this to leave the impression that everyone who is on welfare or social assistance is a common criminal.

Doesn't anyone over on that side think it's wrong or shameful to do that? Are you so interested in trying to grab votes that you lower yourself to that level, that you'll make fingerprinting of people who are on assistance an appropriate thing? For goodness' sake, give your heads a shake.

This government has consistently attacked women and children in everything you have done, from your cuts to welfare to your cancelling of second-stage housing, to your ending of proxy pay equity, to your ending of some the bail verification programs in some of our communities. Everything you do is to get a cheap vote and to attack people who don't have a voice. For a change why don't you start to be ashamed of that kind of thing that you —

**The Speaker:** Order. Response?

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thanks for the comments that in general were supportive of my part of the debate today, and of the member for Hamilton East.

I must say that as we go forward with hearings, it would be very helpful if we had regulations. Everything that is in the bill is a shell that is totally dependent on regulations — that is, levels that will be set — that are not known by us, so we don't know how fully people will be impacted. It's only fair, as the minister says, that we should have access to information to make very meaningful debate, especially when we go on hearings, and we hope that's soon.

Let me say, just to reiterate comments I made earlier, that I am disappointed to be part of a House that brings in mandatory workfare in Ontario. There is a proven track record in other jurisdictions in North America that tells us it doesn't work. I believe and my caucus believes you should instead turn your efforts to real job employment strategies, that you should be invoking some kind of interministerial strategy team that would really deal with people who need help to get off the system, because most people don't want to be on the system. It's a very bleak existence they have when they're on it.

I would wish too that members on the opposite side wouldn't go singing the praises of this bill until they read it for themselves and understand that there are significant measures here. You are not allowing very basic human rights for individuals, simply as a function of what they earn or don't earn. Those are facts that currently are in this bill and are of great concern. Unfortunately, the very people who are affected by it won't have an opportunity to go to court to prove their case because you've already bungled that ministry so badly in terms of how available legal aid is. These are the very same people who don't have access to that service either. I look forward to further debate on this issue.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Boyd:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to lead off our party's discussion of this bill because it is indeed an extraordinarily important piece of legislation, one that's going to affect hundreds of thousands of lives in our province over, one would assume, many years. It's extremely important, as has been suggested by those speaking before, that we all be very familiar with this bill and what its implications would be.

That's extremely difficult to do because, as has been said, so much of this bill will reside in regulation-making power. We have said before that the status quo is not acceptable to us either, nor I think would it be acceptable to the official opposition, because both of our parties over the last few years have looked very hard at various aspects of assistance to people, at the best way to deliver, at different ways of looking at the delivery of services that are going to empower people to be able to maintain themselves when at all possible, and if not, to find the best way, the most dignified way to ensure that the basic necessities are met and that they are encouraged to contribute to our society to the extent they are able.

But again and again in all of the study that was done, first of all in the Social Assistance Review Committee work that went on for a good many years, and the study of the recommendations then took a little longer, in all of those discussions one of the things that was made very clear was the need to prevent arbitrary decision-making, the need to prevent successive governments from being able, according to their own ideology, their own particular financial circumstances, to change the very basis of the

provision of social assistance to meet their needs as opposed to the needs of the recipients.

**1750**

We heard again and again from recipients that if they knew what the rules were, if they could participate in actually consulting on and buying into, if you like, the actual rules of eligibility, the kinds of things that in the old legislation are also set out in regulation, they would certainly feel much more a part of the system.

Again and again, critics of the General Welfare Assistance Act, the Family Benefits Act and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act told us, as a government, when we were in power, told the official opposition when they were in power as a government, and I can only assume have told this government as well, that when you leave everything up to regulation, what you do is immediately set up a system that is suspect, that is subject to abuse, that will constantly need definition, redefinition and interpretation, and that because regulations are not made in public, are not legislated, are not up for discussion, there's no process for discussion, but in fact are made either by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which at least is the cabinet, the responsible and accountable government, or by the minister, and this act gives substantial powers to the minister as well as to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, what you do is set up a situation where a Star Chamber gets to make the decisions about the basic necessities of people's lives.

The principle of social welfare in this country and elsewhere in the world has been to ensure that every citizen at least has their basic needs met, that we have an obligation as a community to provide the necessities of life to every brother and sister citizen in our jurisdiction.

While we might argue, and certainly the right-wing politicians argue, about what a base level of support might be, that at least has been a basic premise within all social welfare legislation that has been passed. So it's quite disturbing that in an act like this, which is completely revamping that system as it applies to Ontario, we have no sense at all of what the definition of basic necessity of life is going to be to this government.

I would remind the members of the government party that by putting in this act in this way, they also are leaving it open to interpretation by subsequent governments, interpretation that you might also disagree with, as we might disagree with your interpretation. It is to the benefit of citizens that they not be subjected to the ideology and whim of successive governments, that there be a much more substantial definition of basic need in a legislative piece of this importance to ensure that there is a continuity, that we do not throw whole classes of people into disarray every time the government changes.

One of the things I will be doing when I have an opportunity to speak at greater length, because there are only five minutes left in this legislative day, is to actually put on the record all the items that are going to be subject to regulation. It is extremely important for the members of the government, the members of the opposition parties and the general public to understand exactly how open-ended this act is and how little substantive and permanent protection there is for those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

I will also be talking about the very substantial change in direction that is suggested. Some of that change in direction is positive, indeed it is. It is a positive general concept to ensure that those who are disabled and because of their disability are unable to work in a consistent way or in a competitive way have the assistance of their community to live dignified and respected lives.

The problem with this act is that those who are most vulnerable in the disabled community understand that the rules could change at any moment. What is a disability today could become not a disability tomorrow. For parents of disabled children, there can be no assurance that the kind of supports the community needs to provide when we as parents no longer are there to help our children will be there and you can count on that. There is no counting on that kind of support in this bill, because any successive government could change basic regulations that would affect the eligibility and the entitlement of anyone under that act. That surely is not the kind of assurance this government or any other government ought to be giving to those who have disabling conditions, who already have a great deal to contend with in their lives and who need the sureness that supports are going to be there when they are necessary.

I'm also going to be talking about the way in which this adds vulnerability. Whole groups of people become vulnerable under this act because of the changes that affect them. My colleagues in the official opposition talk specifically about those people between 60 and 65 who now are eligible for family benefits and who will no longer be eligible, who will need to be part of the Ontario Works program, who will need in those senior years to be always at the beck and call of whatever agency this government decides is going to be responsible for determining what community participation or work experience or skill building they're going to have to participate in. In this particular economic climate, where those of us who are older have increasing difficulty finding jobs in an increasingly competitive market, that is condemning people to a situation which is going to be extraordinarily stressful. It is going to create for them health conditions they now may not be facing in those years and it is going to add to their sense of insecurity and their sense of not being part of a caring community.

Given that it's nearly 6 of the clock, I'm going to conclude my remarks for today and am looking forward to participating in the full debate when the bill is next called by the government House leader.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Pursuant to standing order 34, the question that this House do now

adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Hamilton East has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Environment. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I rise on a matter of very serious concern to the residents of Hamilton, and frankly of concern to all Ontarians, as a result of the Ministry of Environment's mishandling of the Plastimet fire in Hamilton. I was absolutely astonished at the pathetic response by the minister yesterday, where he basically washed his hands of any responsibility and any accountability from the point of view of having to respond to their lack of adequate response to the Hamilton Plastimet fire.

We had a very serious situation, a dangerous, dangerous situation in Hamilton. Over 400 tonnes of plastic were burned. Dioxin levels were five times higher than regulations. There was no definite evacuation notice. There was a refusal of assistance by the Ministry of Environment, from Environment Canada. They put children and seniors at particularly high risk. There was a $3-million cost in cleanup to the municipality, the possibility of a nearby hospital being evacuated, toxic chemicals being flushed into the groundwater. As of today, over 100 of the 225 firefighters on the scene have suffered health effects as a result. This is a brief sketch of the outline of the Plastimet fire.

**1800**

We stood in the House yesterday and asked the Minister of Environment a simple question: Would he call a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire? What the minister did was simply slough it off to the Solicitor General, somehow suggesting that he had no accountability and telling us very clearly that the Minister of Environment has no clout. He has no ability in cabinet to talk to his colleague the Solicitor General and recommend to him that he call a public inquiry. I am sure the focus would be on the Minister of Environment and I am sure that if Mr Sterling had the courage to stand by the actions of his ministry, he would urge Mr Runciman to call a public inquiry.

Let me remind the House what Mike Harris said in regard to a public inquiry: "I think they should be getting answers to more questions, and we want answers too. I can assure the public that our concern is the same. I would like some assurances. I applaud the citizens for wanting to know these answers." That was Mike Harris.

What does the Minister of Environment say? "I'm very concerned for the people of Hamilton. I have no fear of a public inquiry as to what my ministry did or did not do." Let me repeat that again, since the minister's not here, for the parliamentary assistant and the Solicitor General to bring that message back to him. Norm Sterling said, "I have no fear of a public inquiry as to what my ministry did or did not do." It is simple; it is unequivocal; it is a commitment.

What we have seen now is Flip-flop Mike and Flip-flop Norm, who one day felt it was okay to hold a public inquiry and the next day decided to simply pass the buck to the Solicitor General and ask the Solicitor General to look into it, which in my view is simply hiding behind the shield and not being accountable. There was an inadequate, poor response by the Minister of Environment.

Let me say what I said yesterday: Very clearly, the front-line staff is not to blame, because you have cut their budget; you have made it impossible for them. It took 12 hours for the equipment to get there. It took a phone call from your member for Hamilton West at 4 o'clock in the morning that woke up the Minister of Environment, Norm Sterling, to get that van from Toronto to Hamilton. That is not the way we should be doing business in Ontario. A phone call at 4 o'clock in the morning from one government member to a minister to get a van that should have been dispatched immediately: that was indicative of the beginning of the problems in regard to the way this government has handled the Plastimet fire.

The member for Hamilton Centre, joined by a coalition of firefighters, unions and residents, came forward a few weeks ago and called for a public inquiry. We have called for a public inquiry. What is the government afraid of? What is Minister Sterling afraid of? Is it because the public inquiry will show that his massive cuts to the ministry have made it incapable of responding to environmental disasters like the Plastimet fire? Is that the real answer? Or is it that the minister doesn't have the clout in cabinet, as we have seen? If he had the clout in cabinet, I'm sure he'd go to his friend the Solicitor General and ask the Solicitor General to call a public inquiry, and the Solicitor General would agree with him.

It's either incompetence or it's a lack of clout by the minister. I'm hoping the parliamentary assistant who is responding on his behalf will clarify for us if the minister is incompetent and cannot handle his ministry, or if he simply does not have the clout in cabinet to convince his colleague the Solicitor General to call a public inquiry.

The people of Hamilton are not going to forget. The people of Hamilton want answers. This government acted criminally and irresponsibly in its response to the Hamilton fire.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak about last month's fire at the Plastimet facility in Hamilton. I appreciate the member for Hamilton East for raising this particular question so we can fully explain and get on the books what really did happen.

It has been extremely distressing for the residents of Hamilton. They've certainly faced a very difficult, unhappy and uncertain time, but I can assure you that the worst is over and people are getting back to their normal lives. This debate allows us to fully explain what the ministry's role has been on this matter.

This role in dealing with serious fires and spills is to provide timely and accurate information to emergency personnel and health officials. I believe we fulfilled that role extremely well. Within one hour of being notified, the ministry had an experienced environmental officer en route to the scene, and valuable information had been given to the firefighters. This information included the types and the amount of plastic products stored in the building and the fact that no PCB material was stored in that particular facility.

On the way to the scene, the environmental officer observed the magnitude of the fire and called for the ministry's regional level II air monitoring van. This van contains monitoring equipment that can be used to monitor the air for dangerous chemicals and also gives information on meteorological conditions.

The van was dispatched to the scene immediately and began monitoring air quality and wind direction to assist fire and health officials.

Shortly before midnight, ministry staff placed a call to the spills action centre, requesting a state-of-the-art trace atmospheric gas analysis, or TAGA, unit, a $1-million-plus laboratory on wheels.

Both units were available in Toronto, and although mobilizing the well-equipped unit and its crew of environmental scientists does require some setup time, by 5:30 am the TAGA was fully deployed and monitoring throughout Hamilton for chemicals from the Plastimet fire. Later that day the second TAGA unit arrived.

Monitoring results from the two TAGA units, along with unfavourable weather conditions, were passed directly to the Hamilton-Wentworth public health department and were the basis for the emergency staff and city officials to order a voluntary evacuation on July 11.

Right from the first call, and continuing to this day, ministry staff took air, water and vegetation samples. Dioxin levels were among the first to be tested soon after the outbreak of the fire. Dioxin analyses are not simple, nor are they instantaneous; and they are very expensive. They take time and experienced staff working in a well-equipped laboratory.

However, ministry laboratory staff worked around the clock analysing dioxin samples, a procedure that normally takes eight days. They were able to do it under 48 hours. All told, about 100 dioxin samples were completed in record time and provided to ministry and health officials for health evaluation.

Air quality information, with public health advice, was disseminated to area residents through local media. On July 21, ministry staff, the Hamilton health department and police, fire and municipal officials held a public meeting to provide further information to concerned residents. The ministry also set up an information trailer near the site, staffed with ministry and local health personnel who could give information to area residents.

On July 21, my colleagues Lillian Ross, the member for Hamilton West, and Trevor Pettit, the member for Hamilton Mountain, told Hamilton city council that the Ontario government would provide $40,000 to a citizens' committee to fund independent expert evaluation of the ministry's tests of the cleanup of the site.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the dedicated staff of the Ministry of Environment and Energy who worked around the clock at the Plastimet fire. Their professionalism was first-class and was recognized in a letter to the Honourable Norm Sterling from the acting mayor of Hamilton, Mr David Wilson. Some members opposite have also expressed appreciation to our staff, and I would also like to thank them for their kindness and for all the dedication and work they put into this particular fire and to look after the environment and help the residents of Hamilton.

**The Speaker:** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried, subject to section 34 of the clam chowder act. The House stands adjourned until 1:30 pm tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1809.*

# CONTENTS

## Tuesday 19 August 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Eruption in Montserrat**
Mr Curling ..... 11321
**Property taxation**
Mr Pouliot ..... 11321
**Indian Independence Day**
Mr Jim Brown ..... 11321
**Rainstorm in Shuniah township**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11322
**Ontario Lottery Corp**
Mr Martin ..... 11322
**United Empire Loyalists**
Mr Danford ..... 11322
**Health care**
Mr Kennedy ..... 11322
**Labour legislation**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11322
**Peterborough economy**
Mr Stewart ..... 11323

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Ontario Works**
Mrs Ecker ..... 11323
Mrs Pupatello ..... 11323
Ms Lankin ..... 11325

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hydro rates**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11326
Mr Sterling ..... 11326, 11328
Mr Hampton ..... 11328
**Property taxation**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11327
Mr Eves ..... 11327
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Hampton ..... 11327
Mr Eves ..... 11328
**Home care**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11329
Mr Wilson ..... 11329
**Hospital restructuring**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11330
Mr Wilson ..... 11330
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mrs Ross ..... 11331
Mr Sterling ..... 11331
**Rural police service**
Mr Ramsay ..... 11331
Mr Runciman ..... 11331
**Ontario Hydro**
Ms Churley ..... 11332
Mr Sterling ..... 11332
**Automobile insurance**
Mr Ouellette ..... 11333
Mr Sampson ..... 11333
**Highway 407**
Mr Duncan ..... 11333
Mr Palladini ..... 11333
**Municipal restructuring**
Ms Churley ..... 11334
Mr Eves ..... 11334
**Interprovincial trade**
Mrs Elliott ..... 11334
Mrs Cunningham ..... 11334

### PETITIONS

**Assistance to northern Ontario**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11335
**Wellesley Central Hospital**
Ms Martel ..... 11335
**Court decision**
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11335
Mr Grandmaître ..... 11336
**Kidney dialysis**
Mr Cleary ..... 11335
**Women's College Hospital**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11336
Ms Martel ..... 11336
Mr Murdoch ..... 11338
**Rock music group**
Mr Baird ..... 11336
**Water chlorination**
Mr Chudleigh ..... 11336
**Crematorium in Vaughan**
Mr Sergio ..... 11337
**Occupational health and safety**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11337
**Drought relief in Renfrew**
Mr Jordan ..... 11337
**Labour legislation**
Mr Miclash ..... 11337
**Rent regulation**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11337

### SECOND READINGS

**Social Assistance Reform Act, 1997,**
Bill 142, *Mrs Ecker*
Mrs Ecker ..... 11338, 11343
Mr Agostino ..... 11342
Mrs Boyd ..... 11343
Mr Carroll ..... 11343
Mrs Pupatello ..... 11344, 11358
Mr Agostino ..... 11350
Mr Pouliot ..... 11357
Mrs Marland ..... 11357
Mr Miclash ..... 11357
Ms Martel ..... 11358
Mrs Boyd ..... 11358
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11359

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Agostino ..... 11360
Mr Galt ..... 11360

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Visitors**
The Speaker ..... 11326
**Notice of dissatisfaction**
The Deputy Speaker ..... 11338


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mardi 19 août 1997


### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la réforme de l'aide sociale,** projet de loi 142, *M^me^ Ecke*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11359

A 2 ON
X1
D23

Government
Publications




No. 216

Nº 216

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

**Wednesday 20 August 1997**

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Mercredi 20 août 1997**

AUG 26 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 20 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 août 1997

*The House met at 1330.*
*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CHIEF CHARLES FOX

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I rise today to congratulate the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation on the election of their new executive council. Chief Charles Fox was re-elected to serve a second term as grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. Joining Mr Fox on the executive council are three deputy grand chiefs who were sworn in during a ceremonial banquet.

During his last term as grand chief, Charles Fox did an exceptional job representing the views and concerns of the people of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. Having experienced at first hand the dedication and hard work which Chief Fox demonstrated in his position, I believe that he will fulfil his post with as much devotion and enthusiasm. The ongoing support of his community is reflected in the positive accomplishments made during his first term.

As in the past, I look forward to working with the grand chief on issues that affect the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation.

Once again, I congratulate Chief Charles Fox and his executive council on their achievements in attaining their respected positions. I am sure that under their leadership the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation will continue to be nurtured and successful.

### GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** In a press release issued on Monday by Premier Harris, one could read: "We're very encouraged by the signs we've been seeing of a turnaround in Ontario. We're starting to see our efforts bear fruit."

My question for the government is very simple: Where have you been in the last two years? The situation has never been so chaotic and so messy in Ontario. Every single sector is being hit, hit hard by this government. Across the province hospitals are closing, waiting lists for health care services and surgeries are getting longer and longer, schools are forced to cut programs and increase the number of children in classrooms, public workers are being laid off, municipalities are struggling with the downloading mess that is being handed down by your government, in northern Ontario homeowners are facing huge property tax increases, and tenants are facing unlimited rent increases.

The private sector has not been spared. Last year, for example, Ontario restaurant and foodservice bankruptcy reached its highest levels. I could be here all day to tell you what's wrong with this province and what's wrong with this government plan, but I doubt that you would listen to me.

What you should be aware of, though, is that people are very much concerned that the only fruit your efforts are bearing is growing concern, dissatisfaction, anger and frustration among the population in this province with the Conservative government.

### WORLD HORSESHOE PITCHING CHAMPIONSHIP

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** I rise today to congratulate Mr James Breithaupt and the organizing committee of the World Horseshoe Championships, which were held in Kitchener in July.

The committee worked hard for four years to bring the event to Ontario and Kitchener. This was the first time in the history of the 88-year-old event that it was held outside the United States.

Over 1,700 players, the largest number of players to ever compete in the world championship tournament, came to Kitchener in search of a world title. They came from countries such as the United States, Norway and Japan, as well as from all over Canada.

In addition to competing for the world championship, the pitchers were also competing for $50,000 in prize money.

For those members who are familiar with the game of horseshoes, you will be interested to learn that the highest percentage of ringers thrown in the ladies' championship round was 85.15%, while in the men's the highest percentage was 84.21%. To the uninitiated, this means that over four out of five horseshoes pitched were ringers.

The ladies' world champion is Bev Nathe of Minnesota; the men's world champion is Alan Francis of Ohio.

Over the past several years, Kitchener and our twin city, Waterloo, have hosted the Brier, the Ladies Professional Golf Association tournament, the women's world softball championships, the Canadian men's junior baseball championship, and of course we host the annual Oktoberfest celebration.

My congratulations to the two world champions, the organizers of the event and the city of Kitchener for showing the world that Kitchener and the province of Ontario are world-class places to hold world-class events.

## ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I rise today once again to speak about the plight of the flood victims of Essex and Kent counties. Property damage is in the millions of dollars; breakwalls have fallen and are in great disrepair.

As I've advised the Minister of Municipal Affairs on numerous occasions, the situation is critical. The fall season will soon be upon us, and with it will come damaging fall storms. With the current high lake levels, residents on the shores of Lakes Erie and St Clair are in danger of suffering irreparable property damage.

All this can be rectified today if the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing would reinstate funding to the Shoreline Property Assistance Act. We're not talking about a handout. It's not a grant; it's a loan.

Governments of Ontario have a proud history of helping others who have suffered the wrath of natural disasters, recently demonstrated during the great flood that befell Manitoba. Why has the minister not approved flood relief funding to the citizens of Essex and Kent counties?

In addition to my calls for action, this week our leader, Dalton McGuinty, wrote to Premier Harris regarding the lack of support to the shoreline property owners to date, in hopes that damage to property and breakwalls can be repaired promptly.

Ontarians need the help of their government now. I strongly urge the minister to provide assistance that is required immediately.

## SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I rise to express my own dismay and that of the people of the district of Algoma at the fact that the Minister of Education and Training has apparently decided not to make any changes with regard to trustee representation on the two new district school boards: district school board number 2 and district school board number 31.

The minister claims, in a letter dated July 23, "The Education Improvement Commission did not make a recommendation to alter the configuration of district school board number 2." This, of course, is patently incorrect.

As the minister well knows, on May 9 he removed the Hornepayne Board of Education area from the proposed district school board number 1 and put it in district school board number 2, adding 192 kilometres round-trip to the area of that particular board. The total distance from one end to the other of that board is approximately 600 kilometres, yet the minister, in his letter dated July 24, claims they won't change the number of trustees because the formula for distribution of trustees "recognizes the low-population area and ensures that these areas receive adequate representation." This is just a joke.

District school board number 2, according to this government, is a highly densely populated area and therefore should not get extra trustees. How can anyone think that outside of Sault Ste Marie, Algoma district is densely populated? It demonstrates a complete —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**1340**

## VOICE MAIL

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** I rise in the House today to remind members and staff of a resolution passed on February 13, 1997 in this Legislature. All sides of this House agreed with the removal-of-voice-mail resolution that was put forward by my colleague Bill Murdoch, MPP for Grey-Owen Sound.

It seems no one is listening. My constituents and staff are experiencing difficulty and frustration at reaching a live human voice when calling ministry offices. Recently, constituents Harvey White and Larry Ainsworth complained about not being able to work their way through the voice mail system. During debate last February one opposition member called voice mail a science fiction nightmare. I agree with this statement and from the complaints I am getting my constituents agree also. The same member stated, "All people really want is a warm hello and a straightforward answer when they call for assistance."

This morning CHUM radio commentator Brian Henderson asked his listening audience if they had ever tried to call Queen's Park. He referred to the layers of voice mail a caller must go through, often without the desired result. He used voice mail as an example of poor customer service.

I encourage all offices here at Queen's Park to act quickly to support the voice mail resolution and offer our public good personal service. Let's hang up the voice mail and use it after hours.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The gouging of consumers has begun once again with the latest huge hikes in gasoline prices across Ontario. Late last week the oil companies imposed substantial increases in gas prices, bringing the price of a litre of gas over the 60-cent threshold in southern Ontario and much higher in the north.

Many residents in our province woke up to 62-cent-a-litre prices and higher, even 70 cents a litre and over. As the Sault Star put it, and I suspect tongue-in-cheek: "It must be just coincidence that gasoline prices of different brands shot up across Ontario by four cents a litre in the Sault and much of the north. After all, collusion is illegal as well as immoral, so it's unthinkable that the decision-makers at the various companies conspired beforehand and agreed they would hike prices together."

When my colleagues and I have urged the Conservative government to act on this ripoff, this gouging of consumers, we've encountered only apologists, finger-pointers and evaders in the Harris cabinet.

The tourism minister says he thinks our prices he sees at the pumps are quite fair. The energy minister blames everyone else and suggests, as his Republican friends in the USA do, that it's gas taxes that are driving up the price, when in fact only the oil companies' take is increasing, not the taxes. The consumer minister remains silent, as does the Minister of Transportation.

Don't blame the independent operators; they are victims too. Don't blame the local retailers; they get their orders from the big oil companies. It's time for action on the part of the Harris regime, not capitulation to the big oil interests.

## HIGHWAY CLOSURE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I wait for the federal Liberal government to take action on the price of gas in Ontario — long that they should be doing something about it.

I want to bring to your attention, though, an issue that is happening in regard to the Ministry of Transportation in northeastern Ontario. In the community of Gowganda, nearby on Highway 520, the Ministry of Transportation some six months ago was contacted by CN Rail to do some work on that road.

What's involved is shutting down the highway for a period of 12 hours so that CN can do some work on a right of way they have on a crossing on that highway. Six months ago they contacted the Ministry of Transportation to shut that highway down. When? On the Labour Day long weekend, on Saturday.

Anybody who knows anything about northeastern Ontario would know you don't shut down the road between Shining Tree and Elk Lake on a Saturday long weekend. That is a weekend people use that highway in probably larger numbers than most. What compounds things is that the town of Gowganda has a reunion planned for that weekend, and by closing down the highway people trying to get access into Gowganda will have difficulty.

The result is that the Ministry of Transportation, because it doesn't have the staff to deal with it, to properly check with the municipality how they should shut down that road so people aren't inconvenienced, is going to spend $38,000 of hard taxpayers' dollars. To do what? To build a bypass so people can go through that highway for a 12-hour period. I say we should be trying to get the Minister of Transportation to do his job and have the staff there so we can do this properly.

## ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** A leading goal of this government is to promote economic development and job creation in Ontario. According to Statistics Canada's labour force survey, since the June 1995 election, under Harris government policies employment in Ontario has increased by 191,000 net new jobs.

It is my pleasure to inform the Legislature that the Rockwell International plant located in my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay has recently struck a four-year, $672-million deal with Lear Corp to provide seat adjuster systems for the new General Motors of Canada light truck program. Lear Corp, which is building the seats for General Motors 1998 redesigned light trucks and sport utility vehicles, has subcontracted the design and manufacture of the seat adjuster device to Rockwell's centre of expertise in the town of Bracebridge.

I know that Rockwell management and employees are very pleased with this agreement and have put a lot of effort into the program. In fact, most of the work associated with the design of the seat adjusting systems for the program has been done at the technical centre located in Bracebridge. The Bracebridge Rockwell plant currently employs about 360 people and the company believes there will be an increase in the employment base as a result of the new business.

That one of the world's leading manufacturing companies is growing so successfully in Ontario and in Muskoka-Georgian Bay should serve as an example that this province is open for business.

# STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

## EMPLOIS POUR LES JEUNES

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** At the annual premiers' conference the government committed to make youth employment a national priority through a national strategy.

*Applause.*

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I think a little applause to that will be worthwhile.

Education and training must play a vital role in this strategy. As our economy strengthens, more young people are finding work, but at the same time young people still face barriers. We are reforming the secondary school system and apprenticeship training to help students complete their education and to train for a good career.

The government is introducing new opportunities to help 141,000 young people find work. These include the career and employment preparation program, the graduate transitions task credit, business startup loans and support for summer jobs.

I want to draw the members' attention to the summer jobs strategy. With the summer not yet over, the strategy has exceeded its targets. As of August 1, about 44,000 young people have already been helped, nearly 4,000 more than we expected. More than 23,000 young people found work through my ministry's summer jobs service

alone, and thousands more have been helped by the program's information and referral services.

I'd like to introduce to members two students who found work through the program and who are with us today. Kim Chapman gained work experience and acted as a role model for local youth at the O'Connor Focus Community Against Substance Abuse in North York. Mary Renton's summer job at Entertainment Resources Group in Mississauga has given her experience in marketing software to the United States and to Europe.

In addition to the summer jobs service, Management Board's Summer Experience program, the Ontario-Quebec student exchange program and regular ministry summer hiring helped more than 7,700 young people find jobs with the Ontario government, with community groups and as Ontario Rangers.

I'm especially pleased that young people with disabilities and special needs were also able to find work. I want to thank the thousands of employers in business and community groups and government agencies who hired students this summer. I also want to thank the community-based organizations, community colleges and others who delivered the programs so very effectively.

We are proud of the summer jobs strategy, but we have only begun. We will do more.

1350

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I would also like to take this opportunity to tell the House about the success of the summer employment program offered by the Ministry of Natural Resources for our province's youth. Our ministry has employed more than 2,000 young people this summer. The Ministry of Natural Resources employs youth in two different programs specifically. The first is the Summer Experience program, which is part of a larger government of Ontario initiative called Ontario Summer Jobs 1997. The second is the Ontario Ranger program, which has been in existence for the last 53 years.

This government is committed to providing valuable summer work experience for the young people of Ontario. This summer, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, this government has spent more than $5 million on the Summer Experience program and the Ontario Rangers.

The Summer Experience program provides youth with the chance to develop skills which will be valuable to them when they complete their education and begin working full-time. This year the Summer Experience program has employed more than 1,600 young people between the ages of 15 and 24, or up to 29 if they are disabled. They have been spending this summer working at the Ministry of Natural Resources main office, field offices and in most of Ontario's provincial parks. These young people have been employed throughout the province in a variety of jobs, from black bear field research assistants and fish culture technicians to park gate attendants and park planning research assistants.

My ministry's Ontario Ranger program continues to be a success after 53 years of operation. This summer the Ministry of Natural Resources hired 400 young people at 14 camps across the province. They have worked at thinning and pruning young stands of trees, developing and improving campsites, assisting with fish and wildlife projects and clearing nature and snowmobile trails.

The jobs the Ministry of Natural Resources has provided to young people this summer have given them a hands-on experience in managing fish and wildlife habitat and in operating Ontario's parks. These are more than just summer jobs; they can become career choices. The valuable work experience these young people have received will last them a lifetime.

**L'hon Noble A. Villeneuve (ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones) :** Il me fait plaisir de me joindre à mes collègues pour présenter à l'Assemblée une mise à jour en ce qui concerne notre programme d'emplois d'été pour les jeunes.

I'm pleased to join my colleagues to update the House on our summer youth employment program. Earlier this year our government committed $3 million to create summer jobs in rural Ontario. Traditionally young people in our rural communities have had to seek employment in urban centres. With the summer youth employment program, this government has provided rural youth with the opportunity to work and gain valuable skills in their own communities. So far more than 1,500 youth have been hired under the program. That's 1,500 young people living in rural Ontario who are gaining work experience and earning an income while staying close to home.

Ministry staff are busy processing applications, and rural employers still have more than five weeks — and I emphasize five weeks — to get involved. I am confident that more young people will be hired before the deadline at the end of September. After all, the fall is one of the busiest times of the year for rural businesses, and especially for farmers.

Under the program, employers may hire youth at any time between April 15 and September 30 for up to 16 weeks. Eligible employers receive a $2-per-hour investment by this government on the salary paid to young employees, to a maximum of 35 hours a week.

This year, with the introduction of the rural job strategy in the May budget, the summer youth employment program was expanded to all rural businesses, including agribusiness, food manufacturers, non-profit and community organizations. For farmers and any of these kinds of employers, the program provides an opportunity to give young rural people an experience that otherwise might not have been available. For the province, it's an investment in rural youth that will pay dividends for years to come. The work they're doing in the summer of 1997 may encourage some young people to pursue a career in the very diverse and growing Ontario agrifood industry.

The summer youth employment program is yet another shining example of how this government is serious about investing in jobs for our young people and in the future of rural Ontario.

Le programme d'emplois d'été pour nos jeunes est un autre excellent exemple du sérieux de ce gouvernement quand il s'agit d'investir dans des emplois pour nos jeunes et dans l'avenir de l'Ontario rural.

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I too am pleased to inform my colleagues of the progress of the summer youth employment program at my ministry. Some 2,647 young people across the province found employment opportunities through my ministry's programs alone this summer. We approved 274 student venture loans, which created 411 jobs for students. The student venture program helps young people aged 15 to 29 who are returning to school to create their own summer job by starting and running their own business.

The success of this program was in part due to our partnership with the Royal Bank. Young people were made aware of the program through local and campus papers, transit ads, my ministry's self-help centres and student employment centres.

The ideas submitted for new businesses were most innovative and showed good business sense among our youth. Businesses created were diverse, ranging from an in-line skating school to an Asian wedding coordination service to a Web page design company.

We also offered job opportunities for students through my ministry's travel information centres, tourism agencies and the Ontario Travel Associations. Tourism jobs can be especially rewarding for students as they provide them with opportunities to explore their career options in the fastest growing industry in the world.

Our government's 10% tax credit to private sector employers is expected to create 45,000 internship jobs over the next three years. As well, we will continue to contribute towards business startup loans for unemployed youth in cooperation with the private sector.

Clearly, Ontario's youth has initiative and drive. Coupled with our government's commitment to creating a positive business climate, and thereby jobs, Ontario's economy is in the best of hands.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** There's something going on here. We've got the Premier heading over to Saint Andrews and in front of the world he announces, "We have a youth jobs crisis in Ontario." A mere week later we've got all these ministerial puppets on their feet saying, "Look at the fabulous job we're doing in youth employment."

Have we got a problem here? We certainly do. Let's talk about the facts here. Your Minister of Education headed out to Aurora not all that long ago and he decided to do a big splash, "We're going to hire all these students this year." The truth is, the Ministry of Agriculture is undersubscribed for its programs. The last time we asked your Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism about youth programs, he said, "We're helping by freezing the minimum wage levels." Do you remember that absurd answer? That's the calibre of attention we are seeing to youth employment here.

The reality is your numbers for youth employment: a significant cut of $20 million to youth programs. You went from $59 million to $39 million in one year. And you have the gall to stand up here today and talk to us about your concern for young people in Ontario, about your fabulous youth programs?

Is this the same program that included the Environmental Youth Corps in Belleville with the Bridging the Gap program that could not hire six students this summer and therefore didn't take on children in their program to the rate they could before because they didn't have people to work in the program? That was your doing. And you have the nerve to stand here today and tell us all the wonderful things you're doing for young people?

When we talked to businesses that used to participate in your programs, they said, "They're only giving a $2 subsidy and we can't afford to pay the balance, so we're just not hiring students."

I think you're just a little bit too early, because when we get to September and we ask these very same students to pay their new Mike Harris tuition fees at universities and colleges, and after your brand-new and improved youth programs that slashed the number of weeks they work from up to 16 and 20 weeks in a summer down to six weeks — I want to know how they're going to pay your new Mike Harris tuition fees. That is not going to be a successful program.

Here we are in the middle of August seeing all of these individuals having to divvy up the pie so many more ways so you can get more people, so in the end you can say, "We've done more for more people." The fact is, you've done less for more people, and in the end they won't be able to afford your new fees to continue their education.

**1400**

The truth is that many non-profits were involved in accessing your programs for young people. It was their opportunity to provide training and offer excellent programs through their non-profit organizations. A whole litany of them today could not hire those young people as they don't have the funding to pay the additional funds allowed because you went to a $2 subsidy only.

You had to find a way to make a big show in Aurora so you could have the press running after you to get your good-news story, but they have come back to Queen's Park to find out you didn't tell them the whole story. You left out a whole big chunk of news, that is, that you've cut out significant programs that provided an excellent training ground for young people. Bridging the Gap, in Belleville, is a very good example of that. We spoke to them on Friday and know that in the end children suffered in Belleville. They couldn't access a program because you cut that Environmental Youth Corps program.

Don't come into the House today because you're dipping in the polls — your Premier went off to St Andrews and said all of a sudden: "Maybe we're not on the right side of this issue. Young people really are a concern." You can't go on the world stage and talk about youth strategies but come back to Queen's Park and slash $20 million out of some very excellent programs. We won't

allow it. The Liberal Party has always been supportive of anything you would do for young people. But you will not fool them, and we'll make it our job to see that they will not be fooled.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I want to take our last 20 seconds to add my view of the sheer gall of the members of this government coming in and taking pride in what they've done for youth in this province over the course of the summer when we saw in July the unemployment numbers for young people in this province rise to the alarming rate of 18.3%. That is the real unemployment rate. If you add to that all the other —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much. Third party, responses.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Yesterday I stood and said that I thought there was a pattern developing of these feel-good, fluffy announcements from ministers in the House, where they're going to come in and tell everybody that everything's rosy out there, that everything's okay, that jobs are being created and that they're proud of their achievements.

Even I didn't believe they could go this far. This takes some bravado: to come into the House and say you are proud of what you have done for youth employment over the course of this summer, to say you are proud, for example — the Minister of Education and the Minister of Agriculture — of the Ontario public service summer student program. Let me tell you what you did. You cut that from $13.7 million of spending in 1994-95 to $6.3 million — many, many less youth getting access to that program, and you're proud?

The Minister of Northern Development talked about his Rangers program and Nortop and the Environmental Youth Corps and others, the Summer Experience programs he was focusing on. You're proud? You're proud of the fact that you cut that from $35.5 million in 1994-95 to $8.4 million in expenditures? You're proud of that?

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade talked about how proud he was of the student venture programs. Minister, I have a little bit of experience with that portfolio, I was in that portfolio. How can you be proud that you cut spending on student ventures from $2 million in 1994-95 to $400,000 this summer? You're proud of that?

All of you over there, you should be ashamed of what you have done in terms of youth employment in this province. There are 100,000 more young people unemployed now than there were in 1995 directly as a result of your cuts to youth employment programs, and you're proud? How can you be proud of a record like that?

How do you have the gall, the bravado, to stand in this House when there are more and more kids homeless and in the streets, more and more kids that you're cutting off social assistance support and income support when they're trying to live, more kids who are trying to get the money to go on for post-secondary education who can't make it? You're proud?

We know what this is, this spin-doctoring exercise, because we saw the intentional leak in the Toronto Star today about your apprenticeship announcements that are going to be coming up. That's supposed to make the public think that the Harris government is going to do a whole lot in terms of youth and employment and that you really care about it. But let me tell you before you make that announcement that since your government took office, the number of apprenticeships and training clients in Ontario has dropped from 451,500 in 1995-96 to 270,830 in 1997-98, a decline of almost 60%, and you're proud?

Boy, there are a lot of things I disagree with in your government's agenda, and you know it. You also know when I think you're doing a good job that I stand in this House and I say it, as I have responded at times to some of your ministers. But let me tell you, your record with respect to youth employment — youth unemployment — is a scandal. Your Premier said it was a crisis. Well, it is a crisis, and you are doing nothing to address it, and to stand here and try and sugarcoat it and tell people you're proud of the accomplishments you made when you have gone so far back from the records and the standards that have been set is a terrible sham. StatsCan has just recently told us in the numbers that youth unemployment ranges between 17% and 18% in this province, one of the worst records in Canada. You have nothing to be proud about.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** The Minister of Natural Resources should hang his head in shame today for his record on youth employment. The facts are, since he refuses to provide them, that the budget for the Ontario Ranger program was cut from last year to this. Last year 528 Junior Rangers were hired, 154 support staff; this year only 400 Junior Rangers got hired and the ministry refused to give me the information on the support staff and told me I would have to do that via an order paper question. Last year there were 21 camps that operated. This minister closed seven Junior Ranger camps this summer; seven less operated, most of them in northern Ontario.

The minister didn't say anything about his other hat, northern development, and there the only youth program he had was cut from $6.3 million to $4.7 million. I suspect the reason he didn't come with those figures today is that they are so poor he is embarrassed to share them with the House. Shame on all of you for your complete lack of regard for youth and their employment.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HOME CARE

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, yesterday I brought to your attention the case of a two-year-old constituent of mine who is about to be discharged from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario this Friday. I told you that the doctors had quite rightly decided it was time for her to go home, how the mother has quite rightly decided it was time to take her in and

how home care quite rightly decided that they had to assume some responsibility in this regard but that they could not because of a waiting list.

You told me there were no waiting lists in Ottawa. We learned this morning that for three weeks now there has been an application on your desk from the home care office in Ottawa for $1.4 million to address a backlog. There is a waiting list in Ottawa. Will you now admit that there is a waiting list, and could you inform us, please, how many people are on the waiting list for home care services in Ottawa-Carleton today?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** Without knowing the details of the case yesterday, there are no people on the regular home care waiting list anywhere in this province. Ottawa has nine people currently in hospital on what they call complex care, what we used to call chronic care, where the hospitals are suggesting that perhaps for the first time many of these people, because of our expansion of home care and the availability of nursing services, could get out of hospital where they've been living for years and actually live at home. So it's a good-news story. It is not available anywhere else in Canada, I should say. We have the best home care program by far.

If you live in New Brunswick today where there's a Liberal government, you're on your own. You're either in the hospital with no in-home nursing services available — Ontario can be very proud of work done by previous governments, of $170 million of new money put in by this government. It's enabling patients for the first time, including those nine patients in Ottawa, the opportunity to go home.

**1410**

**Mr McGuinty:** I'll take that as an admission by the Minister of Health for the province of Ontario that there is indeed a waiting list for home care services, at least, as far as we know, in Ottawa-Carleton. I am not sure about the other eight cases, but I can tell you about this one, and I am sure the others are just as compelling.

Sarah is to go home this Friday. We have spoken to the discharge nurse at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and she has confirmed Sarah is going home on Friday. The children's aid society has been properly notified. The mother is concerned that she will not be able to provide for her child.

Home care has submitted an application for $1.4 million to you. They cannot provide that care without that funding. Will you provide the funding?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I would remind the honourable member that the Ottawa area, on a per capita basis, receives significantly more money than any other area of the province. So what we're doing in terms of that request is saying to the CCAC, our new community care access centres, which provide one-stop shopping for home care services, a significant improvement to the system, we're having a discussion right now to see — and they're doing very good work at the CCAC — if more money is needed, or a better use of current resources. Given that Ottawa is an anomaly in the province, where it receives significantly more dollars per person than other areas of the province which are able to deliver services for less money, it's a question of fairness at this point, and that's why we're having a discussion with the CCAC.

I will note, though, that in the restructuring report the commission has asked for an additional $5 million to meet the anticipated needs of a growing and aging population. We will certainly be backing up the commission.

So whatever way you slice it, there'll be more money for home care, but we want to do it on a basis so it's fair throughout the province.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want to come back to what we're really talking about here. Sarah is two years of age. She's being discharged from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario on Friday. She's going home to her mother. Sarah has muscular dystrophy and so does her mother. Everybody who has any insight into this matter understands that the very best place for young Sarah is with her mother. She needs five and a half hours of nursing care every day. Right now, home care can't deliver that.

I am asking on behalf of Sarah and her mother once again, will you ensure that they have the necessary care as of this Friday?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Yes. The honourable member should have been informed this morning by the good people at the community care access centre that the case is solved. Frankly, I thought he would get up today and thank the good people at the community care access centre who went out of their way to create a special program so that Sarah can go home for the first time in the 28 months that she's been with us here on this earth.

I think it's a good-news story. I thank the honourable member for bringing it to our attention. More importantly, I commend the people at the community care access centre in Ottawa who were already working on this case long before the honourable member brought it to the attention of the Legislature.

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and has to do with his and his office's role in the Ipperwash affair. You've indicated, Premier, in the House that you had no files, no records because you had no involvement in it. The minutes that were released last week indicate that your executive assistant, Ms Hutton, was at a meeting on September 6 that was developing recommendations around Ipperwash. The notes indicate that she had been speaking with you "last night" on the matter and that — these are in quotation marks, these were your wishes — "out of the park only — nothing else."

My question is — and I'm sure you've talked to Ms Hutton about how accurate those were — do those notes accurately reflect what Ms Hutton said at that meeting and do they accurately reflect what you told Ms Hutton were your wishes in the matter of Ipperwash?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** You're quite right, in the sense that we did not have any meetings, we did not have the lead role. There was a committee that was

set up, perhaps by your government, followed by the successive government, of about 20 people from various ministries who would meet when these situations arose. One representative of the Premier's office would be there, and that was Ms Hutton. That would explain logically — we don't chair the meetings; Ms Hutton didn't chair the meetings, the Premier's office didn't chair the meetings — why we would not have any minutes of any of those meetings. They would be by others, the Solicitor General's ministry, ONAS, native affairs, or what not, that would have the minutes.

I can't give you an interpretation of somebody's notes of what Ms Hutton said a couple of years ago, but it strikes me that in general terms —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — it's quite consistent with the policy of your government and of the NDP government and quite consistent with what we said, that we —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Premier.

**Mr Phillips:** I think the public can appreciate why we continue to push on this.

I will ask again for a direct answer. You have no doubt talked in detail to Ms Hutton. The minutes are quite clear on what she reported to that meeting. The question is very simple. Did she say those things at that meeting? More important, did you have a conversation with her before the meeting and do these notes reflect your instructions: "out of the park only — nothing else"?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me indicate, I haven't had detailed discussions with her, as a matter of fact. As these issues are brought forward I would say, "What would be your recollection?" As I've indicated to you, we are limited, because of court cases, in how much information we can give, but there are some documents that have been made public.

Let me say that I was briefed I think on an almost daily basis over that period of time, because it was quite a serious issue, and it would be Ms Hutton who would brief me, and I think cabinet was briefed; I believe the Attorney General and the Solicitor General would be briefed. Let me quote this to you:

"The general position of our government, and as I understand it of previous governments, was that we would not negotiate the substance of the issue with the occupiers or some people who had put up a blockade." That was said by Bud Wildman, and that certainly was our position.

**Mr Phillips:** I hope the public is listening to this. The Premier refuses to answer the question. We know why he refuses to answer the question: because you said that, you said "out of the park only — nothing else." No negotiations.

I will follow up on an answer you gave on Monday. I asked you who made the decision that there would be no negotiations with the first nations on the burial grounds. You said the OPP made the decision that there would be no negotiations. I'll ask you very directly. You've had 48 hours to reconsider that answer —

**Hon Mr Harris:** That's not what I said at all, not what I said. Tell the truth.

**Mr Phillips:** The Premier says it's not true.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Premier, you must withdraw that comment. It's out of order.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I withdraw that I asked you to tell the truth.

**Mr Phillips:** Very Premier-like. I hope the public is watching.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Lake Nipigon, he simply used the words he was withdrawing. That's completely in order. I've allowed many members to do that. I've allowed many members to withdraw the words. I have allowed it on many occasions.

**Mr Phillips:** On Monday I said to the Premier, "Why did you determine there would be no negotiations with the Stony Pointers?"

"*Hon Mr Harris:* I determined nothing. I gave no direction. I gave no influence on it. We left that entirely to the OPP."

I now ask you to reconsider that answer you gave on Monday. Did you leave that matter of the negotiations with the first nations entirely to the OPP?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As I indicated, we followed exactly the same policy as the NDP. I quote now from Bud Wildman on June 4, 1997: "The general position of our" —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Harris:** I would think you would want to hear this very carefully.

**Mr Phillips:** I want to hear the truth.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Do you want him to withdraw that, Mr Speaker? He'd like to hear the truth from me.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I heard that comment. I don't think it's out of order.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think it was precisely the words I used, but I accept your ruling.

The general position of our government, and as I understand of previous governments, was we would not negotiate the substance of the issue with the occupier or some people who had put up a blockade. The direction that I understand was being followed by our government, as the NDP, as your government, on the issue of the substance, was that there would be no negotiations on land claims on the burial grounds or on the issues that were there. On the issue of the blockade, those negotiations would be left 100%, as I said, with the OPP.

**1420**

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also for the Premier and it concerns the wrongful death of Dudley George at Ipperwash park. In the handwritten minutes of the interministerial meeting on September 5, 1995, regarding Ipperwash park, your executive assistant, Deb Hutton, is quoted as saying, "Premier, last night, OPP only, maybe MNR, out of the park only — nothing else."

What meeting or briefing was Deb Hutton referring to with you when she said, at that interministerial group, "Premier, last night..."? Was she speaking to you alone

on September 4 or were others in attendance at this meeting or briefing where you clearly gave instructions to Deb Hutton?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I can't recall whether there was a meeting two years ago. Ms Hutton may be able to recall, but my recollection is this: There would be no negotiations with the natives, as we said publicly at the time, over any claims while the occupation was under way. That was the policy of the former government and that was the policy of our government and Ms Hutton explained that.

However, we did indicate that any actions, as the minutes clearly confirm, that it would be up to the OPP to handle any of the negotiations or whatever action they felt was appropriate; we would not interfere with that. There was no direction given as to how the Ministry of Natural Resources would get their park back. That was up to the OPP. The OPP did not ask for, I don't think, nor did they want to negotiate land claims, given the success that federal and provincial governments have had over the last 20 years.

**Mr Hampton:** This is not about the last 20 years; this is about: Deb Hutton says, "Premier, last night...." She obviously is referring to a conversation or a meeting with you.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Right.

**Mr Hampton:** Right. That's what we're talking about here. What I've asked you for is the details. I can't imagine that your executive assistant would go to a meeting on a very important issue involving the OPP and a number of officials from a number of ministries and purport to give direction from you without having had that direction. That's what I'm asking you about. She refers specifically to: "Premier, last night, OPP only, out of the park only — nothing else." I'm asking you, did you have a meeting with Deb Hutton? You must have had a meeting, a conversation with her on that last night, the night of September 4. I'm asking you, will you make public today a list of the individuals who attended that meeting or will you make public the records of that meeting? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, there are no records of a meeting. It may have been a phone call; it may have been in passing; it may have been a briefing. I have no way of knowing. But if you're asking me, do the minutes that were released reflect the position of the government, yes, they do: that the OPP were in charge, that there was no direction to be given to the OPP, as the minutes of that meeting say, that the only action the government would take would be to seek a civil injunction. I see absolutely nothing in those released minutes that isn't 100% consistent with the policy followed by your government, by the Liberal government and by every government before that, and in fact 100% consistent with everything we've said on the issue up to this point in time.

**Mr Hampton:** No, Premier, that's where you're quite incorrect, because the written record shows this. Deb Hutton goes to a meeting of senior civil servants dealing with the native occupation of Ipperwash park and she says very clearly, "Premier, last night, out of the park — nothing else — OPP." She's very clear, and the civil servants there got the message.

In fact, if you read the police logs the next day, they got the message. "Deb Hutton, EA to Harris, was at an emergency meeting on Ipperwash with other political staff and an OPP representative." Later on in the police log it says, "John Carson" — Inspector John Carson of the OPP — "stated Premier and Solicitor General want to deal with this."

Premier, it's very clear. Deb Hutton says she got the instruction from you. She refers the instruction to the civil service: "Get the natives out of the park, nothing else. OPP to act." Then you read the police log. The OPP clearly got the message from you.

I ask you, Premier, who was at that meeting? Produce the records from September 4. If you've got nothing to hide, answer the questions.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have absolutely nothing to hide. I am telling you my position, as put forward by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the government and the Premier: We wanted the natives out of the park as soon as possible. We've been quite public about that.

We turned it over to the OPP to deal with that, and the OPP were to deal with it. The OPP, as I understand it, asked for an injunction; the Attorney General, on behalf of the government, sought permission to proceed to court with the injunction as the vehicle they would use. Other than that, everything's a matter of public record.

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Mr Hampton:** A question to the Premier: Your answers so far don't add up, so we're going to go after it again.

You have been invited — in fact you have been subpoenaed —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hampton:** I recognize that your backbenchers don't like that you have to answer these questions, but this is a democracy. We get to put the questions and you answer them.

The last public official who tried this line of defence, that he can't recall, that he doesn't have any records, was someone named Richard Nixon. Do you remember Richard Nixon?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, I want to remind you that as a result of this succession of events, someone died, and the courts have ruled it a wrongful death. The George family has subpoenaed you to appear as a witness, to give testimony under oath at this wrongful death trial.

It's clear from Deb Hutton's comments that you had a conversation with her on September 4, or there was a meeting involving yourself and your executive, Deb Hutton, on September 4. That may be germane to all of this, Premier, and I ask you again, will you go back and search your records? Will you produce Deb Hutton so that she can answer questions, so that we can find out where these directions came from and the impact they had on the OPP that eventually led to the death of Dudley George?

**1430**

**Hon Mr Harris:** As I recall the order of the questions, yes, I remember Richard Nixon and, no, I have not been served with a subpoena. I think there has been a notice of request for discovery in a civil action by one lawyer to my lawyers and that will be handled by the lawyers.

**Mr Hampton:** Yesterday, Premier, the Deputy Premier said to us that you were going to make a personal decision whether you would appear at the hearing and answer questions under oath, so let me put the question to you now. Will you appear at the hearing and answer questions under oath, will you release the names of all the individuals who attended that fateful meeting on September 4 involving yourself and Deb Hutton and will you appear and answer the questions of the Dudley George family regarding the wrongful death? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I'm not exactly sure of the wording that the Deputy Premier used, but certainly I will take the advice of the lawyers in the matter of the civil suit.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, I come back to the part of my question that you didn't answer and it's about your conversation, your meeting with Deb Hutton on September 4. Deb Hutton could not have gone to an interministerial meeting on September 5 and quoted you as saying, "Out of the park — nothing else — OPP," and, "Government must be seen as acting." She couldn't have come up with those words herself. So I'm asking you, and this is of interest to the civil trial and it's also of interest to the whole line of events here, will you produce the records of the meeting that you had with Deb Hutton and anyone else on September 4, because it is germane, it appears, to everything that happened after that and led to the wrongful death of Dudley George. Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We've already produced all the records.

**The Speaker:** New question, official opposition.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm going to follow up on the Premier's comment that this was left entirely in OPP hands. I will quote from a conversation between the two commanding officers about an hour and a half before the shooting death. They're commenting on the action the government was taking, on the injunction that the government decided — not the OPP, the government.

The commanding officer said, "Well, that injunction surprises me," because the one they were going for was different. They went from that regular type of injunction, which the OPP wanted, to the emergency type. He went on to say, "Which you know really isn't in our favour," in the OPP's favour. "We want a little bit more time, but they've gone for that. That's why these papers must come down tonight." He goes on to say, "This is typical, where we get caught and the ball's gonna be in our lap."

Listening now to that transcript, Premier, will you acknowledge that the government decided to act in a way that was inconsistent with what the OPP commanders wanted?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I know the Attorney General can answer.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Quite simply, there's not such a thing as an emergency injunction or an emergency document as the member quotes. An ex parte injunction was sought at the recommendation of government lawyers. As a courtesy, there was an attempt, even though it was an ex parte injunction, to provide notice to those who were occupying Ipperwash park of the nature of that proceeding. There was an attempt to deliver that material; the OPP was asked to do that. Quite simply, this was a very standard procedure and a very usual procedure in these kinds of situations.

**Mr Phillips:** Premier, I proceed to point out and to prove that you and your government were directly and deeply involved in the major decisions at Ipperwash. We challenge you at any time to call any hearing, any committee, any public forum, and we will be happy to prove those allegations.

I go on to say that it's clear from the minutes on September 6, the day of the shooting — these are the minutes; this is what the government said — "The police have been asked to remove the occupiers from the park." Not to work to get them out, not to find a way to solve this; the government asked the police to remove the occupiers from the park. Who made that decision to ask the police to remove the occupiers from the park ASAP?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The minutes are quite clear. The minutes have certain directives that came out of them. They are from the Ministry of Natural Resources: "The minister wants to act as quickly as possible to avoid further damage and to curtail any escalation of the situation"; from the Ministry of the Attorney General: "The minister agrees that an application will be made for an injunction," exactly what happened; finally, from the Solicitor General's ministry: "As a matter of protocol, the Solicitor General's office does not involve itself in the day-to-day operation of the OPP. The OPP will exercise its discretion regarding how to proceed in removing the Stony Pointers from the park and laying appropriate charges."

That's what came out of the meetings. It's quite clear that it was left to the OPP to deal with this matter and to deal with the safety and security issues as they normally would in the normal course.

## FISH HABITAT

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, on August 12 the Ottawa Citizen reported that the member for Lanark-Renfrew had been charged by your staff with two violations under the federal Fisheries Act. Specifically, the member was charged with (1) filling in a portion of a historic canal without a permit and (2) harmfully altering fish habitat between January 1 and April 7 of this year.

Just two days after this was reported, your deputy, Ron Vrancart, sent a memo on your behalf to all MNR staff

advising that you were ordering the staff to stop enforcing the Fisheries Act. That means fish habitat in this province will go unprotected and essentially people are going to have free rein to do whatever they want and destroy fish habitat in the process.

Minister, I want to know from you, are you ordering your staff to stop enforcement of the federal Fisheries Act because you don't have the staff to enforce it or because you have been convinced that you don't have to worry about protecting fish habitat any more?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I want to thank the member of the third party for the question. In her preamble she talked about charges. She knows full well that those matters are before the court and I can't comment on those things. However, she does talk about a very important issue, that under our Constitution fish habitat is a federal responsibility.

Under section 35(2) there was an informal agreement made about 10 years ago which was supposed to be formalized over that 10 years. They've talked about it for 10 years. Eight months ago at a fisheries conference with provincial colleagues and the federal minister, we talked about six months trying to get together and work out a formal agreement. Since that time, after repeated requests, we cannot get the federal government to sit down and discuss a permanent agreement around protecting fish habitat. It is clearly their responsibility. It's not a power grab. If they want to deliver that program, they're welcome to it; if not, let's sit down and work out a formal permanent agreement.

**1440**

**Ms Martel:** I find it passing strange that the minister directed his staff to stop enforcement of this act two days after the charges were reported in the Ottawa Citizen. But, Minister, I don't think you understand the serious consequences of your decision and your action. You have ordered your staff not to enforce the federal Fisheries Act, and what you don't seem to understand is that conservation officers who are designated as fishery officers have an obligation to enforce the federal Fisheries Act. Like police officers, these conservation officers must enforce the law. They have that responsibility. They will have a liability if they do not. You don't seem to understand the position you've put your own staff in. Your action is completely inappropriate. Your political intervention is completely inappropriate. What do you intend to do to ensure that your staff are not kept in the position you have now put them in?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I suppose we could do in Ontario what you did for the last five years under your mandate or the five years before: go on and do nothing. We care very deeply about fish habitat.

We had an interim agreement —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I appreciate the question. I think it draws attention to the issue that we're just asking the federal government to sit down and talk with us. We agreed eight months ago that we would deal with this in the next six months with the federal Minister of Fisheries in Canmore. We have been dealing with this issue for 10 years. We think that Ontario should be recognized. We have 101 federal Liberal members from Ontario. Surely the minister or his staff could phone our deputy minister or our staff, or minister and minister would get together, and formalize an agreement which would avoid the duplication and overlap and make sure that we protect our fish habitat to the best possible with the resources we have from the taxpayers. That's our goal on this, and I want to thank you for asking the question. Maybe it will help speed the process along.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The single biggest issue for constituents in my riding of Cambridge is job creation and economic growth. The focus of the government initiatives has been made to make Ontario an attractive place to invest and do business and measures designed to boost consumer confidence. Attracting more foreign investment to Ontario has to be our top priority.

The biggest employer in my riding, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, recently announced they are planning to boost production of their plant by 25%. This investment is good news for those looking for work in my riding. The level of confidence that investors and business people hold in the Ontario economy is the key employment growth indicator.

Could the minister report to the House on specific progress of these key economic indicators?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'd like to thank the member for Cambridge for his question and I'd like to say that I was very pleased with the news from Toyota that they're going to boost their production. That's very good news. We should be pleased with that.

I'd like to say to my colleagues that the recent Conference Board of Canada survey found that 53.2% of businesses cited Ontario as the most desirable province in Canada in which to make an investment. Our export numbers are up, employment numbers are up, the "help-wanted" index is rising steadily and consumer confidence has jumped 10.5% in the second quarter. That's the sixth straight month for a jump like that. So businesses are opening and they are expanding, and I'd like to give just a couple of examples, if I could: National Steel Car in Hamilton has recalled 800 employees and they're going to hire another 200 next month; Newbridge Networks in Kanata is going to add 800 to 1,000 jobs annually for the next four years.

The list goes on and on, but obviously we're finally doing well again in Ontario.

**Mr Martiniuk:** While we all welcome this new investment in the province and the boost in consumer confidence, some have expressed concern. Many of my constituents are trying to plan for their retirement, make their mortgage payments and pay their bills. They tell me

they are impressed with our growth to date, but wonder if this prosperity will last. What assurances can the minister give my constituents that this economic growth will continue in the months to come?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I'm very happy to respond to the supplementary. The Conference Board of Canada forecasts that Ontario will outperform the rest of Canada in 1997, as well as in 1998, in economic terms. The major banks in Canada are predicting 300,000 new jobs in Ontario over the next two years, and Statistics Canada reported that 11.8% of businesses plan to increase their investment in Ontario. As the Royal Bank economist John McCallum said, "Ontario is doing best and is still climbing fast."

Thanks to our policies, Ontario's economy is finally back on track and we plan to keep it that way. I hope you tell your constituents that.

## MUNICIPAL TAXATION

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** My question is to the Premier. Last week, after your meeting with the mayors, you were quoted as saying: "What I indicated is that it's not our goal to see property taxes go up. Nothing in these trades should impact on the property tax rates positively or negatively." On a daily basis, we're hearing from municipality after municipality about how as a result of your downloading taxes will increase next year. From the mayor of North Bay yesterday we heard it's going to go up 75%; in Hamilton about $60 million.

Last Friday, we had a meeting — when I say "we," I'm talking about two of my colleagues and five of your backbenchers — with 15 wardens and CAOs from eastern Ontario. In each and every case, taxes were estimated to go up anywhere between 20% and 50%. Who are the people of Ontario to believe? You, that the taxes aren't going to go up, or their municipal leaders clear across this province, that taxes are going to go up as a result of your downloading efforts? Who are they to trust?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Mel Lastman says they're not going up. Bob Chiarelli says they're not going to go up. There are many mayors out there who appreciate and understand they're not going to go up. I can assure you that no action we are taking should cause taxes to go up.

As a matter of fact, I believe that by the year 2000 with the actions we are taking, along with the new Municipal Act that neither you nor the NDP would give to the municipalities, along with the substantial reallocation of who does what that you had all these negotiations on but you didn't have enough courage to follow through on, we should see a lessening of the tax impact at the end of the day in municipalities.

I would offer this observation: It is in fact election year, and if there's any way during election year you can come forward with statements and negotiate the absolute best position on their behalf, that's their job and I respect —

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** What the vast majority of municipal leaders are saying is that just based on what they now know, property taxes are going to go up. What nobody yet knows is what you're going to do with your new educational taxes, because for the first time you and your government are going to come into the municipalities and you're going to raise property tax for education on top of what the municipalities are forced to do.

Because of your download, you are going to come in and put a property tax on every residence and every business in every community. You don't know how you're going to do it. You don't know whether it's going to be a flat tax across the entire province or whether you're going to come in and set different tax rates for different areas. I ask you for another guarantee today, another promise to the municipalities. Will you guarantee that no community will see an increase in the business tax they pay for education? Will you give us that guarantee?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Listen. Mike Colle's candidate said there's no need for any tax increase in the city of Toronto. I saw that. Mr Chiarelli said the downloaded responsibilities could be absorbed, that the region's estimate of new costs is inflated —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Harris:** On the whole issue, in the area that had been raised by both members, clearly at least Mike Colle and Bob Chiarelli believe there will be no tax increases in the next three years. Let me make this commitment very clear: We will not be increasing by one cent to the province of Ontario any of the education taxes.

**1450**

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is again to the Premier. It concerns the wrongful death of Dudley George and what happened at Ipperwash park. From your answers today — and I want to be very clear on this — you had a meeting or a conversation with Deb Hutton on September 4. That is the meeting, the conversation she refers to when she addresses civil servants at the interministerial meeting on September 5. Will you give us the names of the people who attended that meeting with you where you gave the instruction: "Out of the park. OPP. Government must be seen as acting. Out of the park — nothing else"? Will you give us the names of the people who were at that meeting, Premier?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Actually, in the interim I have talked to Ms Hutton. You suggested that I would have talked to her extensively. I didn't, because the document was released confirming 100% everything we had said. You seem to suggest otherwise, but that's not true. I have talked to Ms Hutton. It was two years ago. She was indicating that she believes she informed me by phone — she believes it was a long weekend and I was in North Bay — of the occupation, period. As to the rest of the alleged comments, she recalls, as was consistent with previous governments, she indicated that we would not

negotiate substantive issues but the OPP only should be negotiating the end of the occupation.

**Mr Hampton:** This is exactly why we need a public inquiry, so that people like Deb Hutton, who have the germane information, can come forward and relay to us exactly the chain of information that went from you to her to the interministerial committee and finally to the OPP, and which resulted in the OPP saying in their log, "Inspector John Carson states Premier and Solicitor want to deal with this." Premier, will you call that public inquiry now so that all the questions that surround this issue, all the questions that need to be answered, the truth, can emerge?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have relayed to you exactly the chain of events from the telephone conversation to the information Ms Hutton relayed to that committee meeting. But as to whether it would be a public inquiry, a full inquiry, what other information has to come out, you know full well — we've answered this — we are waiting for the matters before the courts to be cleared up. If there is any other information that has not been made public that should be, of course we'll look into vehicles at that time.

## HOUSING POLICY

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you are aware, Oshawa, in the region of Durham, is a rapidly growing area, in fact one of the fastest in the province. This year the housing market in Ontario and Durham remains vibrant and continues to grow, with housing starts 37% above the previous year, providing much-needed jobs and development in Oshawa and the region of Durham. Even though these numbers are encouraging, a number of my constituents have expressed concern that the government is not doing enough to promote and encourage builders to start building again. Could you outline for my constituents the government's housing supply strategy?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'd like to thank the member for Oshawa for the question. Obviously the policies of past governments haven't worked. Excessive taxes and regulations have killed the building industry in Ontario over the last decade. I am very proud of the record of this government in terms of creating a climate to encourage jobs around the province of Ontario. As a matter of fact, I am pleased to point out that housing starts in Metro are the highest they've been in the last 10 years. Is that a coincidence, do you think? I think not.

This government has streamlined and created a one-window approach to the planning approval process. We have finally restored fairness to the property taxes and we've asked the federal Liberal government to reconsider its punitive tax policies on rental housing.

A housing boom in Ontario will not only stimulate growth and prosperity —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Leach:** — in Oshawa and the Durham region, but will have spillover effects right across this province.

**Mr Ouellette:** I know that in July the minister was in the region of Durham and attended an event organized by the Oshawa-Durham Home Builders' Association. I know the minister had the opportunity to speak with a number of industry stakeholders regarding the housing issues in the province with a little local flavour. This is yet another example of the government's belief in consultation. Communication with industry stakeholders is critical in helping identify areas for improvement.

A number of my constituents have contacted me about the issue of social housing and have inquired about the Advisory Council on Social Housing Reform. Minister, can you explain for my constituents what the mandate for this council will be and why it was reformed?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again I'd like to thank the member for Oshawa for his question.

On June 5, I announced the Advisory Council on Social Housing Reform, and since then they've had many very productive meetings. The council members were chosen for their expertise in areas of finance, property management, federal housing programs, and management of private non-profits, municipal non-profits and cooperatives. The council was mandated to look at the current system of administration, finance and regulation of the social housing portfolio, develop principles for reform, and provide recommendations to me for future legislation. The council's advice will not only assist the government to reform the social housing system but will also be useful to municipalities as they start to prepare to assume responsibilities for social housing. I certainly look forward to hearing the council's recommendations on housing policy.

## HIGHWAY 407

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. I'd like to come back to a discussion we began yesterday that involved Highway 407. Last night there was an incident on the 407 that involved an automobile crossing the median and smacking into the wall, an eastbound automobile crossing the median and hitting a wall on the other side. An Ontario Provincial Police officer was quoted subsequent to the incident as saying that had a median been installed there, this accident could have been prevented.

Minister, no one was killed last night. The incident involved a health problem for the driver involved. Will you review this issue and will you consider installing medians on the 407 now?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** Whenever I hear of an accident on one of our highways, obviously I'm always very saddened to that effect. The accident, as far as I know, is still under investigation. The report has not been submitted to the Ministry of Transportation by the OPP.

When safety concerns were first raised last fall, we asked the Professional Engineers of Ontario to do a safety review, and I believe they did a very thorough safety review. The review found that the 407 was as safe as any other 400 series highway, but recommended 12 safety enhancements. Before the highway opened, we implemented all of those 12 safety enhancements. We included installing rumble strips on the side of the shoulder so in case someone does doze off, at least that noise will bring them back. We reshaped the median because of what the engineers said —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** — as to potential crashes, and we installed crash pads along the light standards to make sure that that again was safe for —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

1500

**Mr Duncan:** We also understand that our standards on the 400 series highways, while they are accurate, are not necessarily up to date and do not necessarily reflect changes in traffic engineering that have been developed.

I would suggest to you, Minister, that if you dealt with the toll issue, if you would come clean about what penalties Hughes-Bell is paying for not delivering the toll system on time, if you would get those tolls operating quickly, the interest you're spending, the forgone interest, could be applied to enhancing the safety of that highway. Instead of giving us sorry answers around the mismanagement of your ministry and your government on this issue, we could be spending that money investing in better safety on the highway.

Will you commit today to new funds to put a median on the highway to make it safer and will you commit to dealing with the toll issue so that the interest costs the taxpayers of this province are paying are kept to a minimum?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** The rate of accidents on Highway 407 is well below the average accident rate on other provincial highways. I want to re-emphasize the PEO's report. I just want to quote something for the member": Considering all safety consequences, to build a median barrier would be detrimental to safety." That is the final report of the PEO. "Putting a median barrier close to the edge of the highway puts vehicles closer to another object for them to hit" — Dr John Robinson, chairman of the PEO's report.

To quote another individual of this province: "They" — the PEO — "agreed with our concern with the need to reshape the centre medians and install crash protection devices. If these improvements are implemented, they will address our concerns and make the highway safer." That is OPP Superintendent Bill Currie.

I want to say to the honourable member that 407 is a very safe, very viable, very successful highway and it will be opened to tolling very shortly.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, you will know that I have a private member's bill before the House, Bill 144, which seeks to increase the number of councillors in East York under the new City of Toronto Act that you brought forward, the megacity legislation.

Having had extensive discussions with your House leader and knowing how busy the House agenda is with government business from now until the end of November, I know there is next to no possibility for time to deal with that private member's bill, so I am going to be tabling — legislative counsel is working on it now — two amendments to your Bill 148, the city of Toronto transition bill, which would have the effect of increasing the representation in East York, one by three councillors, which is what they have asked for, although some people have said that would cause a problem in terms of ties on the overall megacity council, so I'm going to put an alternative in that would increase it by four.

You know the problems, you know the issue. What I'm asking you today is for a commitment that you will at least consider those amendments from me and perhaps work with me to see if there is a way you could have the government support the amendments to give equitable representation to East York.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I thank the member from the third party for the question and I'd be pleased to consider her amendments. As a matter of fact , I'll make a commitment that I will provide a copy of her amendments to the transition team so they will be able to inform the new council of the views of the member, because our position is that the size and shape of the community councils and how they're structured and how many represent certain areas should be the responsibility of the new city of Toronto council.

If the member has advice she would like the new city council to have, I'll make sure that advice gets to them through the transition team . I know the new council will take that into consideration when they're reviewing the role of the community councils.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, thanks. I've already talked to the transition team. They are aware of that, I've made that position clear and I think some of them are quite sympathetic to it.

The problem with that, and I know you know this, is that fact any changes with respect to ward boundaries and representation numbers wouldn't come into place until the next municipal election, another three years from now.

When I was a minister — I know you weren't here but you can check with your colleagues — I did work with opposition members when they add ideas. I did sit down with them and talk to them or have our legal counsel meet with them to see if there was a way I could help them make the amendment acceptable to the government so they could bring forward the idea and accomplish it.

Let me ask you, would you agree to meet with me with your staff, or if not you, your legal staff or policy staff

who have carriage of this, and help me draft this in a way that's acceptable to you? The citizens of East York deserve equitable representation now, in the next municipal election, not three years from now.

Minister, you can make it happen. I will be tabling those amendments. You'll have to deal with them. Please, let's get together so you don't have to vote them down.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'd like to thank the member from the third party for her question, because it is an important issue, but it's an issue that we sincerely believe should be dealt with by the new council, not by this government. We've set up the initial structure for the new city of Toronto council and we have set up the ways and means in which the community councils should be established.

If the new city council wants to make any changes to that organization or those structures and how they work, what their roles are, what their responsibilities are, how they're formed, how the boundaries would change, that's a role and a responsibility for the new unified city of Toronto. I think that is the organization and the body that should deal with it.

I'll be glad to work with the member to make sure any of her ideas are submitted through the transition team and ensure that the new city council is made aware of them.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** My question is to the Minister of Health. When it comes to reforming the health care system, the elimination of excess overhead and administrative costs in hospitals is the focus of a lot of attention across Ontario. At the same time, my constituents back in Nepean are talking to me about the growing and aging population.

Could the minister specifically state how the government is developing programs and services to deal with the growing number of people who need long-term-care services, and can the minister give my constituents an overview of what his ministry is doing to ensure that long-term care will be there for those people when they need it?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I thank the honourable member for asking the question on behalf of his constituents. All of us across the province have constituencies which are growing, and the people are aging. Today's number of 1.4 million seniors is expected to double to 2.8 million seniors over the next 20 years. The government is moving very quickly now, and the focus of part of our hospital restructuring is to prepare for the growing and aging population.

We've established 43 community care access centres, getting rid of the 76 home care and placement coordination services that previously existed. The money we saved in administration has been put into direct front-line services. We've expanded home care throughout the province. Just recently, we've put $100 million into our nursing homes and homes for the aged to ensure that people who are in those homes today receive top-quality care. We've announced the largest single investment in the history of health care in Ontario, $170 million, so that 80,000 to 100,000 more seniors —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** — can receive in-home therapies, occupational therapy, in-home nursing and community-based services. We've expanded nursing home beds across the province. We're about to launch the biggest single reinvestment in —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

# PETITIONS

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario which I'd like to read:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram through legislation more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I concur with the petition and will affix my signature to it.

**1510**

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by 235 residents of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas on September 6, 1995, Anthony O'Brien Dudley George of the Stony Point First Nation number 43 was shot and killed by Acting Sergeant Kenneth Deane of the Ontario Provincial Police; and

"Whereas the Ontario Provincial Police met with a representative of the Premier's office before the massive police buildup that led to the death of Anthony O'Brien Dudley George; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario need to know what role the government played in ordering the Ontario Provincial Police to confront the Stony Point people with violence;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call a public inquiry into the Ontario Provincial Police shooting of Dudley George."

I affix my name to the petition.

## ADOPTION

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** This petition was presented to me by a constituent, Ms Lois Hayes of Newmarket. I present it to the Legislature as requested.

"Whereas this government seeks to decrease the deficit and save public funds; and

"Whereas Premier Harris and the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus espouse a commonsense approach to governing; and

"Whereas these elected representatives of the House advocate plainly the need to reduce individuals' reliance upon government and government services; and

"Whereas the rights of adults who were adopted in Ontario remain unrecognized in law, constituting discrimination against them; and

"Whereas the present restrictive system for the disclosure of personal information to persons who are adopted is not cost-efficient; and

"Whereas Ontario's adoption community cannot be classified as a special interest group because one in five Ontarians are directly or negatively affected by the secrecy and denial inherent in sealed records, legislation and policy; and

"Whereas current legislation governing the disclosure of personal information to adult adoptees in this province contravenes the Canadian charter, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights; and

"Whereas the adoption community has sought legislative remedy for this situation and a reform of this discriminatory law which has been found to be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of adopted persons continuously by every government consultation process, study and legislative standing committee since former Minister of Community and Social Services the Honourable James Taylor first commissioned a report in 1975 which recommends open records;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, beg leave to petition the 36th Legislative Assembly of this province as follows:

"We demand that government legislation be passed into law forthwith to abolish the mandatory counselling requirement attached to disclosure services under the Child and Family Services Act and grant adults who are adopted right of access to their own original unamended birth certificates.

"In closing, these commonsense measures will promote autonomy for Ontarians who happen to be adopted, will establish parity between adopted and non-adopted persons with respect to the right to obtain one's own birth information and will allow for the reinvestment of millions of tax dollars presently spent on perpetuating a myth."

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on July 15, 1996, the government of Ontario forced seniors with incomes over $16,018 to pay an annual $100 deductible on prescription drugs;

"Whereas this user fee imposed significant financial hardships on vulnerable seniors;

"Whereas on April 1, 1997, the government of Ontario unfairly and knowingly forced Ontario seniors to pay that $100 deductible again;

"Whereas the time between July 15, 1996, and April 1, 1997, is only eight and a half months and not one year;

"Whereas the Ontario government has wrongly taken an additional $30 million out of the pockets of seniors for prescription drugs;

"Whereas Ontario seniors feel cheated by the government of Ontario and this $30-million ripoff shows a tremendous disrespect for Ontario seniors;

"Therefore be it resolved that the government of Ontario credit Ontario seniors for the three-and-a-half-months' overpayment they were forced to pay on prescription drugs by making the effective date for the 1998 $100 deductible July 15, 1998, instead of April 1, 1998."

I've attached my name to that petition as well.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition which reads:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas cancer claims in excess of 20,000 lives annually in Ontario alone; and

"Whereas cancer treatment costs Ontario taxpayers in excess of $1 billion annually; and

"Whereas the best way to fight cancer or any disease is through preventive measures; and

"Whereas the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer has advised the government to set realistic and realizable targets for phasing out the release of environmental toxins; and

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly on April 18, 1996, passed a resolution to that effect with support from all three parties;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"The Premier and the Minister of Health should immediately implement the April 18 resolution and strike a working committee to begin the task of setting realistic targets for the phase-out of persistent bio-accumulative environmental toxins."

I will gladly affix my signature to this petition.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by 461 people from the London area. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

## ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial government has discontinued the northern support grant which has traditionally compensated the north for assessment deficiencies and increased service costs; and

"Whereas the north is confronted with unique costs, severe weather conditions, higher prices, difficult terrain, higher levels of unemployment and a lower per capita income; and

"Whereas the provincial government has indicated its intention to eliminate all municipal unconditional grants, including the conditional road subsidy; and

"Whereas there has been no indication that the Ontario mining tax which was implemented to fund northern support grants will be eliminated or reduced;

"Now therefore be it resolved that we petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fully support and endorse the position taken by the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities in its paper entitled Fairness and Equity for Our North, and that the province be requested to enact a new act to establish and provide on a permanent basis northern Ontario investments for northern municipalities to provide funds to maintain the basic infrastructure in terms of roads, water and sewer facilities and provide funds to stimulate the social and economic development of the north; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, believe that the amount set aside for the northern development investments be equivalent to the amount set aside for the northern support grant in 1989 indexed on an annual basis."

I affix my signature as I am in agreement with it.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have the following petitions to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris government has introduced Bill 136; and

"Whereas Bill 136 strips entitlements to employee status and therefore pay equity rights for home child care providers; and

"Whereas home child care providers are predominantly female; and

"Whereas home child care providers are one of the lowest-paid groups of workers in Ontario;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to withdraw all of Bill 136 and in particular its implications for the Pay Equity Act."

I agree with the sentiments in this petition and add my name to theirs.

## CASINOS

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario in excess of 100 signatures. It deals with casinos and a referendum. Thank you.

**1520**

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Mine is very timely in light of the fact that the government is changing the rules of the House today.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'm sure it is. Can you read it?

**Mr Bradley:** I will.

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues such as health care, education and care for seniors;

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly, who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules

which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

### WOMEN'S COLLEGE

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly which reads:

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

I'm proud to affix my signature.

### COURT DECISION

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** Whereas communities strongly disagree with allowing women to go topless in public, I have a petition signed by a number of residents.

"To enact legislation to require women to wear tops in public places for the protection of our children and for public safety in general."

### PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, has proposed the fingerprinting of Ontario citizens; and

"Whereas fingerprinting Ontarians was never promised in the Common Sense Revolution, or in his election campaign; and

"Whereas universal fingerprinting of Ontario citizens is a direct violation of basic civil rights and fundamental rights of privacy; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is intervening and intruding into all aspects of daily life, from megacities, user fees, rent controls, and market value taxes, which he never promised in the election campaign;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose Mike Harris's plan to fingerprint Ontario citizens, and to respect their privacy and to stop creating a mega-government that does not respect the basic freedom and individuality of the citizens of Ontario."

I've attached my name to that petition as well.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I beg leave to present the 41st report of the standing committee on government agencies.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Does the acting Chair wish to make any brief comments?

**Mr Miclash:** I know the Chair will probably want to make comments at a later date.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### LYNDE MARSH PROTECTION ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LYNDE MARSH

Mr Flaherty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to preserve Lynde Marsh in Whitby for conservation and educational purposes / Projet de loi 151, Loi visant à préserver Lynde Marsh à Whitby à des fins de conservation et d'enseignement.

**The Speaker (Mr Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** Lynde Marsh should be protected and preserved not only on behalf of the people of Whitby and Durham region but on behalf of all the people of Ontario. Some development has been planned by local authorities. This regrettable decision was based in the mistaken belief that an adequate buffer zone, with a vegetative barrier, would be in place before development occurred. A monitoring committee was supposed to ensure that adequate protections were in place to protect this class 1 wetland.

My constituents feel that all necessary steps must be taken to protect the marsh, and I support this struggle. I previously organized a group of concerned environmental organizations. I've also had discussions with development groups. We must make every effort to preserve the marsh now and in the future.

This is a class 1 wetland which is of provincial and national significance. It is the last remaining class 1 wetland on the north shore of Lake Ontario between Hamilton and Brighton. Unfortunately, this private member's bill is

necessary because of the proposed development on the shores of Lynde Marsh.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the motion as amended for adoption of amendments to the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 26, 1997, I am now required to put the question on the motion. Shall the motion as amended for adoption of amendments to the standing orders carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1527 to 1532.*

**The Speaker:** Please leave the galleries now. Don't ask me to use force. There is no force necessary. Please leave the galleries now. All the galleries must be cleared.

All those in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Arnott, Ted | Harris, Michael D. | Pettit, Trevor |
| Baird, John R. | Hastings, John | Preston, Peter |
| Bassett, Isabel | Hodgson, Chris | Ross, Lillian |
| Boushy, Dave | Jackson, Cameron | Saunderson, William |
| Brown, Jim | Johns, Helen | Shea, Derwyn |
| Carroll, Jack | Johnson, David | Smith, Bruce |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Jordan, W. Leo | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Cunningham, Dianne | Kells, Morley | Stewart, R. Gary |
| Doyle, Ed | Klees, Frank | Tascona, Joseph N. |
| Ecker, Janet | Leach, Al | Tilson, David |
| Elliott, Brenda | Leadston, Gary L. | Tsubouchi, David H. |
| Fisher, Barbara | Marland, Margaret | Turnbull, David |
| Flaherty, Jim | Martiniuk, Gerry | Villeneuve, Noble |
| Ford, Douglas B. | McLean, Allan K. | Wettlaufer, Wayne |
| Fox, Gary | Munro, Julia | Wilson, Jim |
| Froese, Tom | Mushinski, Marilyn | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Galt, Doug | Newman, Dan | Wood, Bob |
| Grimmett, Bill | O'Toole, John | Young, Terence H. |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Ouellette, Jerry J. | |
| Harnick, Charles | Parker, John L. | |

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise and be recognized one at a time.

**Nays**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bartolucci, Rick | Gerretsen, John | Miclash, Frank |
| Boyd, Marion | GrandmaTtre, Bernard | Morin, Gilles E. |
| Bradley, James J. | Hampton, Howard | Patten, Richard |
| Brown, Michael A. | Hoy, Pat | Phillips, Gerry |
| Christopherson, David | Kormos, Peter | Pouliot, Gilles |
| Churley, Marilyn | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Pupatello, Sandra |
| Cleary, John C. | Lankin, Frances | Sergio, Mario |
| Conway, Sean G. | Martel, Shelley | Wildman, Bud |
| Crozier, Bruce | Martin, Tony | Wood, Len |
| Curling, Alvin | McGuinty, Dalton | |
| Duncan, Dwight | McLeod, Lyn | |

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 58; the nays are 31.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to introduce a motion to make amendments to the standing orders, amendments that have been agreed upon among the three parties.

**The Speaker:** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion to amend the standing orders. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** I also seek consent, if it's the appropriate time to do it, with regard to the procedure for considering the motion and for addressing the rest of the time this afternoon in the House. I believe in that regard we have unanimous consent to have a one-hour debate on the motion, 20 minutes allotted to each party, and at the end of that time the Speaker will put the question; if a recorded vote is required, the division bell will be limited to five minutes.

Further, after that, that the second and third readings of the Supply Act be completed this afternoon.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to need a copy of that. Do you have that, by chance?

**Hon David Johnson:** I have the first part, Mr Speaker, not the last part.

**The Speaker:** Okay. That's a complicated agreement and we'll have to know what the agreement is.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** If I could be helpful, Mr Speaker, why don't we quickly deal with the matter with regard to the motion on the standing orders? There is unanimous consent on that, and I believe the government House leader has that in writing.

**The Speaker:** Do you have any problem with dealing with that first, the motion, and then dealing with these?

**Hon David Johnson:** With respect, we have an understanding on the Supply Act this afternoon. All right.

**The Speaker:** If everyone would listen very carefully, it would be helpful, because you're seeking unanimous consent on this and it is complicated.

Consent to have a one-hour debate on this motion that you've given unanimous consent to hear, 20 minutes allotted to each party, and then at the end of that time, I will put the question and if a recorded vote is required the division bell will be limited to five minutes.

He is also seeking unanimous consent to have second and third readings completed on the supply motion.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You know what? I'm seeking —

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, could I just clarify something?

**The Speaker:** Clarify the unanimous consent?

**Ms Lankin:** No, I think there is unanimous consent, but the wording is slightly wrong. Could I just —

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

**Ms Lankin:** Just so it doesn't get too confused, the government whip did try to seek consent about deferral of the vote to a certain time, and we didn't agree on that. We've agreed to the completion of the debate on second

and third readings today. That's as far as the agreement goes.

**The Speaker:** No vote?

**Hon David Johnson:** You have to have a vote.

**Ms Lankin:** Of course we will.

**The Speaker:** So you'll have completion of second and third readings and vote on second reading?

**Ms Lankin:** That's what we agreed.

**The Speaker:** Okay, no vote on third. Is that clear? Agreed? Hold it.

The difficulty I have with that particular unanimous consent motion is this: If at 6 o'clock we are debating second reading, you're asking me then to have a vote on second reading and consider debate for third reading to be done, and I can't do that

**1540**

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker, I think you can agree to this unanimous consent within the rules of the House. It's then up to the parties to ensure that second reading is concluded at such time that there is time for third reading, which we have all agreed to do. We understand that if for some reason one of the parties took it through to 6 o'clock on second reading and didn't leave the time for appropriate third reading debate, you couldn't then enforce the unanimous consent because we'd be past 6 of the clock, but we would be in violation of a three-party agreement and there's no intent to do that.

**The Speaker:** Then you don't need unanimous consent. I can't ask for unanimous consent, then. That's my difficulty.

**Hon David Johnson:** It's sufficient for me that it's recorded in Hansard that we have had this debate and we have the third party on record and we have no objections from the opposition.

**The Speaker:** Then I'll stick with this on the paper. That says one hour of debate on this motion, that you've just agreed to with unanimous consent, 20 minutes allotted to each party, and that at the end of that time, the Speaker will put the question; if a recorded vote is required, the division bell will be rung and limited to five minutes. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** So I'll read the motion at this point, Mr Speaker. Is this the appropriate time?

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon David Johnson:** I move that standing order 9 be amended by deleting clause (c.2) and substituting:

"(c.2) The House may sit outside the hours provided in clauses (a) and (c) on the passage of a government motion for that purpose. Such a motion requires notice, as follows:

"(i) A motion providing that the House sit past 9:30 pm on one or more days must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the second sessional day of the week immediately preceding the first week to which the motion applies.

"(ii) Any other motion under this clause must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the first sessional day of the first week to which the motion applies.

"The question on such a motion shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate. If a recorded vote is requested by five members, the division bells shall be limited to 15 minutes."

That standing order 24(b) be amended by deleting the number "40" and substituting therefor the number "60."

That standing order 24(c) be amended by deleting the words "five hours" and substituting therefor "seven hours."

That standing order 24 be further amended by adding the following clause:

"(d) Notwithstanding clause (b), the whip of a party may indicate to the Speaker at any time during a debate governed by this standing order that one or more of the periods of debate limited pursuant to clause (b) of this standing order allotted to members of his or her party are to be divided in two or more parts. Such speeches shall be given consecutively without rotation among the parties and shall be deemed to be a single speech for the purposes of standing order 25."

That standing order 35 be amended by deleting the words "clause 9(c.2)" and substituting therefor "standing order 9."

That standing order 55 be amended by deleting the word "may" and substituting therefor "shall."

That standing order 57 be amended by deleting the word "third" and substituting therefor "fourth."

That standing order 68 be amended by adding the following clause:

"(d) No bill shall be considered in any standing or select committee while any matter relating to the same policy field is being considered in the House."

That standing order 105(g) be amended by deleting the words "(excluding re-appointments, appointments for a term of one year or less, and appointments of persons who are public servants under the Public Service Act who remain public servants after their appointments)" in the first paragraph and substituting therefor "(excluding re-appointments and appointments for a term of one year or less)."

This debate over the next hour concludes a long debate, some 30½ hours of debate which began in June, I guess it was, although work was done prior to that to pull together a new set of standing orders. This is a process, it seems to me, that every government goes through. We know that the government prior to 1990 went through a process of reviewing the standing orders, we know that the previous government went through a process of reviewing the standing orders and this is the current government's addressing of the standing orders. I think it's only appropriate, in that circumstances change, that from time to time every government looks at the procedures that govern how the House is run, how the business is conducted.

We had a few objectives in terms of reviewing the procedures. Some of the objectives were to enhance the rights of members of this Legislature, and by those rights I mean in particular the ability of members to enter into the debate, to be part of the process, to represent their

constituents and to have the opportunity to stand on the floor of the Legislature and express their opinions.

In that regard and in regard to a number of other items, we scrutinized the procedures of the federal government and of some of the other provincial governments, and I guess in this particular case we borrowed from the federal House of Commons. In the federal situation the speakers are allocated less time than the amount of time per speaker at one opportunity that we previously had here in this Legislature. That allowed more people the opportunity to speak. In our case, 90 minutes was allotted to a leadoff speaker and many people would say that 90 minutes is just too long. Certainly, at the municipal level they would not tolerate one individual speaking for 90 minutes. There are many people who would say, "If you can't say it in 10 or 20 minutes, you can't say it." If there's a view you have to express, you should be able to get to the point and express the concerns of your constituents. Don't beat around the bush; don't go on and on forever.

In the federal House they didn't allow 90 minutes; they allowed 40 minutes for a leadoff speaker. In the federal case they feel that 40 minutes is enough to express the sentiments of individual members. Subsequent speakers are allowed either 20 minutes or 10 minutes. We thought if it works in the House of Commons, it can certainly work here. By doing that, you don't listen to one speaker all afternoon. You might listen to three or four; four or five people may have the opportunity to speak.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Could you limit the amount of time —

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

**Hon David Johnson:** However, I will say that concerns were expressed to me, to the government, that 40 minutes for a leadoff speaker was not enough time, and one of the amendments that's being proposed here today is to increase that from 40 to 60. It's still a reduction from 90 minutes, which was the previous practice, but I think one hour is a goodly period of time and allows ample opportunity for the leadoff speaker to express the sentiments.

Other than that, we felt that if the members needed the time in a thoughtful way to reflect on the legislation, the important legislation that comes before this House, they should be given the opportunity to achieve that time, to get that time.

In the Legislature in British Columbia they have evening sittings, and we have adopted that process here in Ontario. We have said that to ensure the members of this Legislative Assembly have the opportunity to look thoroughly at the legislation, to look thoughtfully at the legislation, to make sure the legislation is appropriate, well-thought-out and comprehensive, we would indeed adopt the opportunity for evening sittings and the government would have that opportunity.

**1550**

Through those two actions, we have given the members of this Legislature more opportunity to consider the legislation, to speak to the legislation, to debate it and to ensure that the views of their constituents are being entertained in this Legislature. This will be of great assistance, not only this fall but in subsequent years, to make sure legislation is thoroughly and completely considered by all members and by the House.

There are a number of other features. Most people I talk to are astounded that in there has been a vote on the budget in only three of the last 10 years.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** No one has ever asked me about that, ever.

**Hon David Johnson:** My colleague and good friend opposite from the Liberal Party has said nobody has ever asked. I must say nobody has ever asked me about that either, but when I raise the issue at meetings, they assume that there is always a vote on the budget.

I ask, "How many people expect that we have a vote on the budget?" and all the hands go up. Everybody in the room says: "Sure, you have to have a vote on the budget. The budget is surely the most important part of the provincial government; it's a foundation. Surely there has to be a vote." But there isn't. There are votes on pieces that come out of the budget, but in terms of a budget, we've only had a vote in three of the last 10 years. The new procedures we have require a vote to be taken each and every year. That's another important component.

There were obviously loopholes, where people watching would see that bells were ringing, that procedures were being used to eliminate or reduce debate in the House. I call them loopholes; they're not illegal. I'm sure the members on the other side of the House would say none of them are illegal. They're there, they can be used, but they do prevent the efficient operation of this House. They do not add to the debate; they do not add to consideration of a bill; they simply delay and stall the government from moving forward.

**Mr Bradley:** What are you talking about? Nobody's arguing getting rid of those.

**Hon David Johnson:** The member for St Catharines says, "Nobody's arguing getting rid of those." I'm pleased to hear that and I'm pleased to hear we have that sort of agreement, because I think the people of the province would say: "Absolutely, get rid of the nonsense. Get on with the debate. If you're against a bill, speak against it, pound your desk, show your opposition to it, but get on with the debate and don't use the stalling and delaying tactics."

The House leaders have had the opportunity to consider the standing orders. We have come forward with some changes here today. This is a continuing part of the process that began before the summer. I think it shows the willingness of the government to compromise. I know some of the amendments that are in here are not our first choice, but we realize we all have to work together in this House, so we're bringing forward a package today.

Some of the changes that are in this package will be good for all the members of this House, some of the changes in here are more to the benefit of the opposition parties, but we all have to work together and get along. I hope that's what this will promote.

Finally, because my 10 minutes is up, we are also committing, through a standing committee, to address further changes as time goes on. In terms of all the members of the House, there's perhaps some view that that process will take place in the longer term, that having gone through this process now there may not be an enthusiasm to delve back into that tomorrow morning, but I would like to see a committee further review some of the other ideas that came up.

The House leader for the NDP, for example, brought forward an idea about prioritizing the business of the House, and I think we should follow up and see if we can make that workable. There's an idea that came up. Maybe we weren't able to give it full consideration at this point in time, but in the longer term I think he's got a point that should be looked at.

We voted on the main motion. We have a set of amendments here today that I think reflect a getting together of the House leaders. We'll set up a committee through the standing committee to further review some of these matters and possibly in the future come forward with some further changes that reflect the views of all the members of this House and promote the workings of this Legislature.

With those comments, I'll sit down and allow my colleague for Nepean to take the floor.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'll just speak for a very few minutes on the amendments contained in this motion presented by the government House leader. It's interesting to note that the government House leader did sit down with his colleagues and genuinely tried to listen and have some of what he heard reflected in this motion and has brought it forward immediately after the first motion was dealt with, and to their credit they are allowing it to be dealt with expeditiously by the House.

The amendments presented by my colleague the government House leader represent a number of instances where the government has moved to meet some of the concerns — not all, but some of the concerns — of the opposition, particularly requiring notice when the House would sit past 9:30 in the evening, allowing for more debate, changing the 40-minute speech blocks to 60 minutes and allowing 10-minute speeches to start only after seven hours, instead of five. That will add even more debate to the amendments that were presented in June by the government House leader.

As well, an interesting concession is allowing the speech time to be split, with notice from the whip to the Clerk. That is very important. That will allow more members to participate early on but at the same time allow a member — for example, if the critic of a given bill wanted to participate for the full 60 minutes. That would only add to democracy and allow more members to debate. For example, if there were 60-minute speeches, that could be split by three or four members in the House and that would be something that would be very helpful.

Allowing the business statement to be read, clarifying that there be more debate on the budget and expanding the power of the standing committee on government agencies, these are all substantial movement on the government House leader's part to show that we're prepared to listen and to consult, as the three party House leaders did over the last number of months.

**Mr Bradley:** Make no mistake about it, this is all about shoving the agenda of the government through the House much more quickly than it has already been shoved through the House. Those members of the government who were behind closed doors at the caucus meeting of the Conservative Party yesterday, and some in the hallways after, expressed concern about how quickly the government is moving, how recklessly the government is moving, how drastically it's moving and how it's not looking at the consequences of its actions. That's what this is all about. Please understand that.

If the government House leader and the member for Nepean stood up and said, "That's what this is about," I would at least give them credit for being honest and straightforward, because that's what it is about. Maybe some of you will agree with that, and I accept that you really believe that's good for this Legislature, but it's not.

The problem is that each subsequent government is extremely reluctant to change it. When the NDP changed the rules quite drastically to generally reduce the amount of debate in this House on legislation and the opportunity for the opposition to stop the government in its tracks from time to time, the Conservative government that followed did not change those rules. I suspect any government following would have been very reluctant to change those rules.

We as members of the Legislature, and ultimately the people we represent, lose. Democracy loses. I know democracy seems to be cumbersome sometimes. I know it seems to be much slower than many people who have their small businesses, their insurance firms, would like it to be, because they're used to moving quickly, and that's the way business should move. Business is different from government. I would never advocate that we apply the rules of this House to the rules of running a corporation or a small business. They are different, and they shouldn't be the same. I would agree with that.

**1600**

What is happening, though, is that mentality is creeping into the dealing with democracy. Make no mistake about it, to the people who may be watching this or reading the debates, this is the most important legislative initiative this government has brought forward, because it is going to grease the skids for all the future legislation the government wishes to bring through.

We all remember the infamous Bill 26. I would say in their heart of hearts many Tories look back upon that day when Bill 26 was brought before the House, the omnibus bill which changed some 47 acts of this Legislature was brought forward. When the government wanted to ram it through before Christmas with, yes, hearings, but just before Christmas, the opposition stopped the government from doing so. As a result, we had hearings across the province in various municipalities, and the government introduced 150 amendments to its own legislation. That's

the importance of having debate. That's the importance of having the opposition the odd time employing extraordinary powers, not powers you like to employ.

If I could use the analogy to war, I'm sure no government, no President, no Prime Minister has ever wanted to use nuclear weapons. That is reserved for only the most extreme cases. Oppositions think that way as well. It has to be an extreme case before one will employ extraordinary actions.

But let me tell you why the opposition, on two occasions I can think of, employed extraordinary, extraparliamentary even, measures. That was because the rules had already been changed to diminish debate by previous rule changes in this House. When you diminish the opportunity to debate, which I would prefer, or even to filibuster, as the member for Welland-Thorold did on one occasion for some 17 hours, when you diminish that opportunity to talk things out, you force the opposition and others to go to extraordinary tactics.

What will happen now is that we will find some other tactics to use. I hate doing that. I really do hate doing that. But you're taking away the speaking time. If the government wants more time for debate, I have no objection to sitting at night, none at all. I think that's fine, and I think that measure would be supportable. But know what the real purpose of that is: They want to count it as an additional day in the debate, 6:30 to 9:30 as an additional day for the purposes of time allocation motions or closure motions. That's what that's all about.

If the government really wanted some of its members or all of the members of the House to be able to have a greater opportunity to participate in debates in this House, it would simply have extended the amount of time and had these sittings at night and would have sat longer than the calendar calls for. You heard no one in the opposition complain that you were coming back in January. You went almost all the way through. We're back in August; nobody is complaining about that. The government has an ambitious agenda, and I don't object to the government having more days sitting. But what they really want is to have more days without more question periods.

Look where they've placed question period. Question period in our system is oh, so very important. Americans come in and watch this Legislature and they're astounded by the fact that the government of the day has to answer questions in a timely fashion. The government has now relegated question period through the rule changes from third place to seventh place. Then the government has said that at 4 o'clock, even if question period is in progress, maybe it has been in progress 10 minutes, it will end. The time that television and radio people, particularly television, have to file their stories is quite limited.

The government can manipulate this to such an extent that it can avoid the kind of scrutiny that's good for all of democracy. This is a step backwards. I tell you it is a step backwards. I'd be ashamed if a government of which I were a part were introducing this. But I'll tell you, it's always tempting to governments to do so.

When I was first elected to the governing side, I remember the new members who came in from the Liberal Party. They were impatient with the opposition. They said: "Aren't these people childish? Aren't these people foolish? Aren't these people obstructionist?" I had to explain that that's the role of the opposition; that in order that our government of the day would be more accountable, that we would do things right instead of doing them quickly, it was essential that the opposition have those powers and exercise those powers from time to time to stop the government in its tracks or at least to slow the government down.

Ernie Eves, whom I've had a lot of time for in this House in terms of the contribution he has made, made an interesting intervention that I think is worthy of putting on the record again. He was speaking to the NDP rule changes on June 22, 1992, and he said the following. I think all government members and the public should remember this.

"I think one has to understand that the only way opposition — not just opposition members but any public opposition to any proposed piece of legislation — can be effectively dealt with or talked about under our system of government, under the parliamentary system of government, is through the opposition parties' ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even stall or slow down progress of a particular bill, and that has worked very effectively over the years against governments of all political stripes." Ernie Eves, now the Treasurer of this province, was right.

Norm Sterling, another person who has been here since 1977, in this case wrote a letter to the Ottawa Sun. Mr Eves read this into the record as part of the debate. He was quoting Norm Sterling, the member for Carleton. He said the following:

"Over the past six years in opposition, I have been successful in forcing the government of the day to accept some amendments to their legislation. My only tool was to delay or threaten to delay. What sense is there for me to bother to debate if I have no means to make them listen?"

These rules take away the bargaining chips that the opposition House leaders have. Before, we could say to the government House leader, "Well, you can have the following bills or the following motions, but we would like these conditions," perhaps more time for hearings, perhaps more communities to be visited. That's gone. You've taken that all away. The government House leader can virtually walk in now at the behest of the Premier — because make no mistake about it, the Premier runs this government, and we have a more presidential style every time we have a new government. The Premier will simply say, "I want this through," and it will be through. The government backbencher's role will be to applaud, to get up and read the speeches that are provided by government research and don't ask you to think but simply to read what the government wants you to read into the record, and it will go through quickly.

Will it be more efficient for the government? It certainly will. Will it be better for democracy? Will the legislation be better as a result? The answer is no. You

see, the purpose of debate often is to delay, not simply to make the case but sometimes to delay, and that is so the public has a longer period of time to look at the ramifications of the legislation.

The changes that are proposed in this particular motion represent tinkering. They are better than what originally was there, but they are essentially tinkering. It's the old story of one saying, "Well, thank you for kicking me in the shins because you didn't kick me in the face." I don't think many people will be thanking the government for this, particularly those who are opponents of the government. The consequences are not simply dire for those of us in this House; they're dire for everybody. They're dire for the people who are the victims of legislation or the beneficiaries of legislation. You will do things in the wrong fashion more times now.

All these proposals, I say, make the Premier happy. The Premier is an unhappy man because he feels his agenda should move through more quickly. He is not a man who is given to patience. Whatever his virtues might be — and I'm not here to denigrate the Premier — he is not a man given to patience. He is not a man who could be considered not to be stubborn. Both of those are traits I have seen in him, and I don't pass negative judgement; I've seen those. That is reflected in the changes we see this afternoon that have been voted upon already.

Most people would say the government is moving too quickly, too drastically, too recklessly and not looking at the consequences of its actions. How ironic that at the very time Conservative members of the caucus are expressing this view, reflecting that view from the public, today they have voted on a motion which in fact will allow Premier Harris, at the behest of his unelected advisers, to ram more measures through this House, to get the revolution implemented in this province.

Not everything you're going to do is going to be bad for the province. Not everything any government does is bad for the province. But you're going to make far more mistakes as a result of this, and you're not going to be looking at the ramifications of your actions.

It is, as I mentioned, difficult to get the next government to change. I watched the interviews in the Legislature after certain questions were asked on this. They asked the opposition leaders, "Are you going to change things?" They both gave an undertaking that they would review the rules. Well, let me tell you the reality of it. I've watched this over the years and what happens is, they're too attractive to the next government.

**1610**

So, Conservative members, some day when you're in opposition 42 years from now or whenever that happens to be, you will have to live with the consequences of that and you won't be able to do your job as well as you would if the rules were as they were before the changes. Don't look to that to happen.

Everyone loses in this, in my view. Everyone who is elected to this House loses, except the Premier, a few cabinet ministers and the intelligentsia who advise the Premier, the ones who were never elected but know far more than members of the Legislature about what is good for the people of this province. At least that is what they would let you believe, and I know some of you know who those people are.

The role of the opposition is an important one. When I was a cabinet minister, I used to extol in speeches the role of the opposition, explain to people, whether it was students or others, how important it was that not just the government view be heard, but the opposition be heard, that government really be called to account.

In the final analysis, the public will choose. If they want your government re-elected, they will do so. If they think another party might do a better job, they will make that choice. But they should make that choice based on proper debate of legislation because some of the changes you make are irreversible and when they're irreversible, it's important that you do them right.

I hope you don't do them wrong. I don't sit here wishing that the government is going to be making mistakes that will have dire consequences for the province. I don't want you to be re-elected. It's unrealistic to say that obviously. But I don't wish you dire consequences. I really don't wish that a disaster happens to you. I hope that simply, based on policies and ideas, perhaps we will be looked at more favourably, but I don't wish you dire consequences in what you are doing. But that's what will result from this.

This whole idea was hatched in the Premier's office. I've seen suggestions that certain members of the Legislature have made these suggestions. It's nonsense. It's all done with the Premier's consent and at the behest of the Premier. You want more time to sit and, as I've mentioned, we're more than happy to see that. I understand your wanting to remove the chance for two of the major stoppages you've had. I understand that. I don't like it as an opposition member because it takes away a bargaining chip or an opportunity, but I understand that and I don't sit and condemn the government for doing it.

What I am condemning you for is taking away the amount of time for debate because the amount of time for debate is key in this House. That's why I felt very unhappy and uneasy about having to engage in the filibuster, for instance, where we read amendment after amendment. I would have preferred that we had debate after debate, hours of debate on that so the public could see the issues, not putting forward all these amendments. That wasn't the first choice, but it turned out to be the only choice and again, as you restrict the rules more on debate, you're going to see more of that, and that's not good for democracy. I'm not going to enjoy that, the public will not think it's great and the government will be just as annoyed as ever because we are doing it.

We are in essence going to have fewer days of sitting, not more days of sitting as the member for Nepean likes to suggest. We will have, as a result of this, fewer days of this House sitting and we will have fewer question periods and less accountability, and a government, no matter who it is, needs accountability.

When I was a minister I hated coming into question period because I was always nervous that somebody had something I didn't know about or there was a weakness in government policy somewhere. You're always nervous as a minister. If you aren't, you're not doing your job. But it was important that we be held accountable because if we weren't accountable, I'm telling you, none of us does as good a job when that accountability is diminished.

You're going to see far less cooperation. I think some members think there wasn't much cooperation between the government and the opposition. There is a surprisingly large amount of cooperation. When the new rule changes come in, the incentive is lost for the opposition because we have only a few opportunities to stick it to the government, if you want to put it that way, and we're going to use those now, ones that we wouldn't have used before probably, because the rules are changed.

One has to say: "I guess we're going to have to employ these tactics. I guess we're going to have to say no to unanimous consent." A government House leader always knows the importance of unanimous consent for anything. That is the most important thing a government House leader has. The opposition sometimes needs it and the government, in retribution and retaliation, will be saying, "You cannot have it." Does either side benefit from that? No, but that's a consequence of what's going to happen with these rule changes.

You have two for one now, of course. You have the night sitting which gives you an additional day on another bill without a question period. That's what I call the two-for-one provision, and I don't think that's good, though I don't object to the government sitting at night to get its agenda through.

This House, unfortunately, is going to become irrelevant. As it is now, it's sometimes hard to persuade people to run for politics because they begin to ask: "What power do I really have? If I'm a" — I don't like the word "backbencher" — "non-cabinet member in the government, all I'm supposed to do is laugh at the Premier's jokes and applaud and be good people out in the hallway when the press asks us questions. I really don't have that much power." And I tell you, that's not just this government. I want to say that. It's not just this government, but they think about that.

And the opposition says, "You know, if I'm down to a 10-minute speech after the seven hours of debate, and I've got a bun feed in the riding or something to cut the ribbons, why am I going to wait around here?" It may seem of minor consequence to you, but that's exactly what's going to happen. This House will become less relevant. We'll become glorified social workers. We will become people who, instead of spending our time carefully scrutinizing legislation and policies and measures of the government, will be simply back home getting the good old votes the way maybe it used to be at one time, and really not doing our job properly as legislators.

This, in essence, will not be the lead story. The press gallery is empty, except for one assiduous individual there. The gallery where the cameras are is not full. The government knows it can get away with this. I said in the House before when you introduced these changes that you can judge a government best by what it does when it thinks no one is looking. Maybe you can do the same with people. The original suggestions came forward on the federal election date, when they would be buried somewhere. Then, on another opportunity, there was something else going on and the government on a Thursday afternoon dropped something else to do with these rule changes.

Governments know that the editors today are not going to be telling their people at Queen's Park to cover the rule changes. That's just not a catchy story. Yet what we're doing this afternoon has more impact on democracy in Ontario and the wellbeing of this province than any bill you've brought forward, any measure you've brought forward, any policy you are promoting.

In Ontario, I guess it will be a sad story. The opponents will use extraordinary tactics. The House will become far less relevant. But one thing Premier Harris can say, one thing this government can say, is, "By gosh, in Ontario the trains will run on time."

**Mr Wildman:** I rise to participate in this debate in a very serious way because I am very concerned about what this will mean for the legislative process in Ontario, and I don't say that lightly.

I want to refer to a couple of things the government House leader said in his comments at the outset of this debate. I'd like to refer first back to the last change in the rules, which was carried out by the NDP government in 1992. The House leader for the Liberal Party has referred to comments made by the then third party House leader, the member for Parry Sound, Ernie Eves. I'd like to refer briefly to what the member for Parry Sound then said because he's a very experienced member and he knows the way this place works.

He said, "I believe it is essential that we change the rules only by consensus of all three parties. Sure, any government, I suppose, that has a majority can change them unilaterally; none ever has in the province of Ontario and now none will up to this date.

"We were hoping of course that the government would not proceed unilaterally and it did not, although a government of the day can do it if it has a majority. I think this place only works when there is a spirit of goodwill among all three parties, and in particular among all three House leaders. If any government ever did proceed unilaterally with rule changes, it would become a very acrimonious place indeed."

**1620**

Then, further:

"Unilateral actions by governments — which can be done if you have a majority; eventually it will pass, but if that's how you want to proceed — will result in nothing but chaos and acrimony around here for the next two to three years, whenever it is the Premier decides to call the next election." That was said by the member for Parry Sound on June 22, 1992.

It's interesting that the member for Parry Sound pointed out in that debate that the government of the day did not

act unilaterally, that there was negotiation among the House leaders regarding rule changes.

Interestingly enough, the member for Parry Sound proposed a rule change in those negotiations that was accepted by the then government, the so-called Ernie Eves rule, which would prohibit governments from introducing new bills for second reading in the last two weeks of a session. Interestingly enough, this government is now changing that rule. That is one of the rules this government has eliminated, and in my view eliminated unilaterally.

I want to speak to that for a moment, because the government House leader indicated that this was the end of a long process, that we'd had about 30 hours of debate and there had been discussions and so on. Well, I recall that in June of this year, when we last debated the rules, the government House leader, Mr Johnson, stated:

"I've also given my undertaking to the members of the other parties, through the House leaders, that over the course of the summer I'd be happy to get together with the other two House leaders to further discuss this matter and to see if we couldn't seek a resolution that would resolve some of the concerns" of the opposition members. Then further: "It's my hope in all of these matters that we can negotiate something that's acceptable to all parties."

**Ms Lankin:** If only he meant it.

**Mr Wildman:** Yes, if only he meant it. We took the government House leader at his word when he said that on June 26, 1997, so we looked at the rule changes that were introduced by the government and we went over them. It took us about two to three weeks. We came up with some alternative proposals that would respond to some of the concerns that were raised by the government members and by the government House leader and at the same time would preserve the rights of all members of this House and would ensure continuing accountability of the government of the day.

When we came up with those proposals, I then wrote a letter to all members of the House, giving them my ideas — the ideas of our caucus, not just my ideas — and suggesting that we should meet over the summer to negotiate around these issues. I did have a conversation by telephone with the government House leader as well as my friend from St Catharines, but that was it until last week. Then last week, suddenly the government House leader wanted to have a meeting, the Thursday of the week prior to our resuming the legislative session on Monday. This was supposedly to fulfil the commitment made on June 26 that we would negotiate over the summer.

We had a long meeting. It went from about 5 until about 9 in the evening. Then we had another meeting — I wasn't present because I had to be with the Lieutenant Governor in my riding, but my colleague from Beaches-Woodbine attended the meeting — on Monday. But that was it.

Now the government House leader has brought forward an amendment to the motion that he introduced for changes to the rules. He indicated in his opening remarks that there was unanimous consent. I want to make something clear here: There was unanimous consent that we would deal with this motion today and that we would have a debate for an hour. There is not unanimous consent about the rules that are being proposed by this government.

It is true that the government House leader has responded to one or two of the concerns we raised about limiting debate. They are very, very minor changes. They do benefit the proceedings of the assembly, I believe. But it's a bit like, to use the analogy of the terrorists in Ireland, when an IRA terrorist puts his pistol to the head of one of his opponents and says, "I can shoot you in the head, or if you prefer, I'll kneecap you." That's what this government is now doing: They are kneecapping us.

The end result is that the opposition members of the House and all members of the House will not have the same opportunity to participate in a debate of the issues of the day and of laws that are proposed by the government and other government initiatives that they once had. Members' time will be limited. The government has argued that what these rule changes are about is enhancing the role of the members. Well, that is to say black is white. It does not enhance the role of the members at all. In fact, it limits the members. It limits the time they have to debate, it limits how long they can speak on debates in the House, it limits the number of questions they can put on the order paper and it extends the length of time the government has to respond to those kinds of questions on the order paper. How can anybody argue that is enhancing the role of individual members?

If the government were really concerned that government backbenchers were not getting enough opportunity to participate in debates, they could extend the length of time they are prepared to have debate. It's simple. Their problem is they want to rush everything through. They want to get things through, each bill, in less than three days, and that does give them a problem if they have a large number of members of their caucus who wish to speak. But if the government were prepared to have longer consideration of legislation, if they weren't in such a rush, if they were willing to hear from everyone, then all members of the House would have greater opportunity.

The government wants it both ways. They want to be able to rush things through, but they also want to have the appearance of more members being able to participate in the debate. That's what these changes are largely about. It doesn't enhance the role of the opposition or the government members who are not in cabinet. What it does is enhance the opportunity of cabinet ministers to get things through with less scrutiny. That's what it is about.

I thought it was interesting when I read in the press comments made by the Premier just in the last couple of days. According to the press, some members of the government caucus have been raising concerns about the speed with which the government is moving on a number of initiatives. They have spent some time in their constituencies over the last few weeks and they have heard from people in their constituencies that they are concerned the government is moving on so many fronts so quickly and perhaps isn't doing things in a wise and considered

way. They have raised concerns and suggested that the government might rethink its approach.

Here we have members of the party supporting the cabinet ministers, supporting the government, who are themselves saying this government is moving too quickly. So how can the government argue they aren't getting things through fast enough? Their own members — I suppose a minority of them, a minority who have the gumption to get up and say so — are saying they are moving too quickly. It's not just their members, of course, though; it is the public. They are expressing the views of the people of Ontario.

Nobody thinks this government is moving too slowly; no one, apparently, other than the Premier and a few of his backroom boys. They want to get everything through that is difficult and controversial by the end of this calendar year so that they will have a free time to coast going into the next election. That's what these rule changes are about. They're about enabling the government to move more quickly and do things with less accountability and less scrutiny.

**1630**

I suppose it is a nuisance to be questioned. I suppose it's a nuisance to come into the House and listen to opposition members get up and criticize. I suppose it's a nuisance to have difficult issues raised. That is a nuisance. It slows things down to an extent. But that's what democracy is about. Nobody could question the speed with which Stalin could move when he wanted to. He was able to get things through very quickly when he wanted to. But all of us in this House pride ourselves in the fact that we are not so-called democratic centralists, which was what Stalin used to call his system of things.

Perhaps all the power in this government is centralized in the Office of the Premier, and he wants to get things through quickly; he doesn't want to hear debate; he doesn't want to hear criticism; he doesn't want to have to answer difficult questions. But that's what our political system is based upon, that we have the opportunity to raise differing views, that we have the opportunity to disagree civilly, that we don't have to resort to the kinds of extraparliamentary initiatives that people have to use in countries that do not have democratic systems. We do not have to resort to arms, to bombs, to violence to change government policy. We use words. We use talk. We use debate. It takes a long time sometimes but it is valuable and important. It is the very basis of our political system.

People in this House have used the argument, "Well, we've got to get the trains moving on time." We know where that phrase comes from. It comes from the 1930s in Italy, and yes, Mussolini got the trains to run on time, but you'd better not disagree with him, because you had no right to disagree. That's not what we want in our system. We want to have debate, we want to have consultation, we want to have argument, and in some cases we want to have delay and reconsideration, review.

It's interesting that here we are debating amendments to the motion to change the standing orders, right after the majority in this House has passed the motion to change the standing orders. This demonstrates just exactly what I'm talking about. The government has realized that some of the things it wanted to change were not the best thing to do. There were some mistakes. There was one in here where they had four days when they meant three and they had to change it. That's what happens when the government moves too quickly, when it doesn't review carefully enough what it wants to do, when it doesn't listen to other people. We are demonstrating in this debate exactly why we have to have considered review of legislation and change.

I suppose the government considers itself to be revolutionary, and there are those who have said that in a revolution people get hurt, sometimes things happen that are not the best, but in order to bring about the desired change you have to be able to live with that and accept it. To make an omelette you have to break a few eggs. That's the kind of argument that's put forward. The fact is that in my study of politics, in my study of history, when you use these kinds of methods to force through your position, when you override the views of others in the name of some high principle, inevitably that high principle is lost. That is the tragedy of the Soviet system. That was the tragedy of the Russian Revolution. It was the tragedy of the Russian people that in using those kinds of violent dictatorial methods for high principle, the high principle was lost and those violent, dictatorial methods remained for 70 years and plagued the Russian people. All those who purport to be revolutionaries should consider that very carefully.

Once a government decides that debate, opposing views, should not be considered seriously, perhaps are even a nuisance, then that government is on the way to destroying the very basis of our political system that it says it is there to try to preserve. The speed of the political system is not as important as the ability to ensure that all views are heard and responded to; not just expressed but responded to.

I want to make it clear that in agreeing to the process for the debate this afternoon, we have not agreed to these rule changes. I want to make it clear that I support the views the member for Parry Sound expressed in June 1992, that a government cannot force through changes and expect that this House and our system will operate well. Yes, I believe that after these changes come into place, the government will be able to get its major pieces of legislation, its major initiatives through perhaps a little more quickly, not very much more quickly but a little more quickly. But mark my words: The government is not going to get its overall agenda through more quickly, because as Mr Eves, the member for Parry Sound, said in 1992, "There will be acrimony in this place."

We are being forced to swallow these rule changes, and as a result we will regurgitate debate on everything in this House. Even minor pieces of legislation, what the government may consider to be minor, will provoke lengthy debate. Your changes, which are to become the maximum times for debate in future, I predict over the rest of this session of this House, this Parliament, will become the minimums. Sure, you can meet in the evening — we have

no objection to more lengthy meetings if you wish; we object to the two-for-one days, as was expressed by the member for St Catharines — sure you can do that, but you're not going to get things through more quickly, and things will be acrimonious and they will not operate properly and well in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Further debate?

Mr Johnson has moved amendments to the standing orders. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1639 to 1644.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Arnott, Ted | Hastings, John | Pettit, Trevor |
| Baird, John R. | Hodgson, Chris | Preston, Peter |
| Bassett, Isabel | Johns, Helen | Ross, Lillian |
| Boushy, Dave | Johnson, David | Runciman, Robert W. |
| Brown, Jim | Jordan, W. Leo | Shea, Derwyn |
| Carroll, Jack | Kells, Morley | Smith, Bruce |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Klees, Frank | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Clement, Tony | Leadston, Gary L. | Stewart, R. Gary |
| Doyle, Ed | Marland, Margaret | Tascona, Joseph N. |
| Elliott, Brenda | Martiniuk, Gerry | Tilson, David |
| Fisher, Barbara | McLean, Allan K. | Turnbull, David |
| Fox, Gary | Munro, Julia | Villeneuve, Noble |
| Froese, Tom | Mushinski, Marilyn | Wettlaufer, Wayne |
| Galt, Doug | Newman, Dan | Wilson, Jim |
| Grimmett, Bill | O'Toole, John | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Guzzo, Garry J. | Ouellette, Jerry J. | Wood, Bob |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Parker, John L. | Young, Terence H. |

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agostino, Dominic | Crozier, Bruce | Martin, Tony |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Curling, Alvin | McGuinty, Dalton |
| Bisson, Gilles | Duncan, Dwight | Miclash, Frank |
| Boyd, Marion | Gerretsen, John | Morin, Gilles E. |
| Bradley, James J. | Grandmaître, Bernard | Patten, Richard |
| Brown, Michael A. | Gravelle, Michael | Phillips, Gerry |
| Christopherson, David | Hoy, Pat | Pupatello, Sandra |
| Churley, Marilyn | Kwinter, Monte | Sergio, Mario |
| Cleary, John C. | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Wildman, Bud |
| Colle, Mike | Lankin, Frances | Wood, Len |
| Conway, Sean G. | Martel, Shelley | |

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 51; the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There are a couple of points of order that we would like to raise.

I would like to begin with one seeking clarification. As a result of these rule changes, both the initial motion that was passed and this set of amendments that was just passed, both indicate that these amendments to the standing orders, except the amendment to standing order 110, take effect at midnight immediately following the day on which they are adopted.

I would like to seek clarification of when you believe these standing orders would come into effect. I would suggest to you that the day on which they are adopted being today, Wednesday, that midnight tonight is midnight of the day on which they are adopted, and therefore the midnight referred to here, "immediately following the day on which they are adopted," would mean midnight of Thursday of this week that the rules would come into effect.

I think it would be helpful for all of us in the House to have a clarification, a ruling on that. I think there is an argument that can be made with respect to —

**The Speaker:** As a matter of fact, we had that discussion at the meeting today and we came to the conclusion, or I came to the conclusion, that they will take effect midnight tomorrow.

Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** Obviously that's not a case in point here right now because there's nothing before us right now that would test that, but presumably the government would have the opportunity, if it deemed appropriate, to raise that matter again, from the point of view that the matter isn't being tested here today in any way.

**The Speaker:** They asked for a ruling on when they come into effect and I ruled that they come into effect midnight tomorrow. As I read the drafted copy made by the government, it seemed fairly clear to me it comes into effect the day after it's adopted. The day after it's adopted is tomorrow.

**1650**

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, just in clarification, the decision that was made was in the absence of any submissions from the government in that regard.

**The Speaker:** The member stood on a point of order and asked me to rule on it and I got up and I ruled on it. If you wanted to make a submission, you should have got up and said, "A point of order: I'd like to make a submission," I guess. I don't know. I'm at a loss here, government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, it's very unusual. I'm not so sure I had the opportunity to do that. You stood up immediately and you said you'd consider this and I had no idea what you were going to say. You made your ruling.

**The Speaker:** With the greatest of respect to the government House leader, I would like to hear from you if you would care to make a submission, I keep an open mind on all these subjects and I'd be happy to hear from you. I'll hear from you if you'd like to make a submission. The point is that I need to hear from you now simply because the House is going to adjourn and there are implications involved in the future works of this place. So if you want to make a submission, please make it, and I say to you very clearly, to the government House leader, I have an open mind. I reviewed it. I heard what the member for Beaches-Woodbine said, and if you feel you didn't get

an opportunity to submit, compelling arguments I'm always open to and I would like to hear those.

*Interjection.*

**Hon David Johnson:** I think I agree with that.

Mr Speaker, You've already made it clear that your ruling is that it comes into effect tomorrow night. I'm having a little difficulty in my mind coming to grips with the fact that any submission I might make would be very fruitful at this point, but nevertheless —

**The Speaker:** I could only read what I had before me, and what I had before me was as I read today. I will read it for all members so they can hear it, and if it's helpful to give you some time to formulate some thought on this, I'll read it directly:

"That these amendments to the standing orders, except the amendment to standing order 110, take effect" — and here's obviously the most important part — "at midnight immediately following the day on which they are adopted." If you felt I ruled hastily, I'm sorry, but it seems fairly clear to me in the written word that the government produced: "...take effect at midnight immediately following the day on which they are adopted." They're adopted today. They take effect at midnight the following day.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Gerretsen:** For clarification.

**Mr Preston:** All right, that's exactly what I'm going to do. In the future it may be helpful to adopt "2359" or "0001," as a number of organizations worldwide have done, because midnight is ambiguous. If you said "2359 on the day of adoption," you'd know exactly when it is.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Brant-Haldimand, you can take your seat. I appreciate that submission and it could be very helpful.

**Hon David Johnson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think that illustrates the point, and I have had some evidence, which I don't have before me today, not knowing that this was coming up, that in some circles midnight is considered to be in the next day. Then midnight following today would be tonight and consequently this would take effect — the procedures —

**Mr Gerretsen:** We're not allowing you to change the calendar.

**The Speaker:** Member for Kingston and The Islands, and I caution the members of the opposition to please come to order. I want to hear the government House leader's submission, and the same opportunity was given to the opposition. I ask that the same discretion be given to the government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** It's my submission, Mr Speaker, that it would come into effect tonight — indeed midnight is considered after today, first thing tomorrow morning — come into effect at that point. So in fact the rule changes would be in effect tomorrow. I believe there is a school of thought that midnight is in the subsequent day, not —

**Mr Wildman:** That's midnight plus a second.

**Hon David Johnson:** It's midnight plus one millisecond or something of that nature, so that midnight is in the next day, not in this day, as it were. So the rules would come into effect — in effect, tomorrow they would be in effect.

**The Speaker:** A question to the government House leader: If in fact that was the case, would it not have been simpler to say "take effect at midnight the day they are adopted?"

**Hon David Johnson:** That might have been more simple, but I believe those who drafted it thought nevertheless, because of that convention in certain circles, that they were drafting the bill in the same fashion. They meant exactly the same thing. There was no reason to draft it any other way.

**The Speaker:** I certainly appreciate the government House leader's submission. Reflecting on the words, I could see that you could read it as you read it. The difficulty I'm faced with is, I've read this and I have to interpret these words. I've interpreted it the way I've interpreted it, which is, the words "take effect at midnight immediately following the day on which they are adopted" mean it takes effect tomorrow at midnight. That's my ruling.

**Mr Wildman:** On another point or order, Mr Speaker: I'll provide you with wording. I would like to bring to your attention another point of order related to the motion that was passed today amending the standing orders. According to the terms of the motion as you've just ruled, the new rules will take effect at midnight tomorrow, but the motion states that the amendment on standing order 110 will take place immediately.

The motion reads that the amendments to standing order 110 "take effect on the third sessional day after August 1, 1997, that the House meets." This is the third day in August that the House is meeting, therefore I would think that standing order 110 is effective immediately. Standing order 110(a) reads as follows: "No standing or select committee shall consist of more than nine members and the membership of such committees shall be in proportion to the representation of the recognized parties in the House."

However, in October 1995, this assembly passed a motion to set aside the then standing order and to allow up to 14 members on each standing committee. Now that the standing order has been amended, I believe you must rule that the new standing order takes precedence over the motion of the House.

How can we have decided to set aside a standing order of the House which had not even been contemplated at the time? My question is: The motion that was passed in October 1995 was in relation to the unamended standing order 110. We have now amended that standing order. My view is that this new standing order, which takes effect immediately, must take precedence over that motion. If it does take precedence over that motion, that would mean the committees that are meeting this afternoon are in violation of standing order 110.

I believe it cannot be your responsibility as Speaker to determine which of the present 13 members of the Legislature should be removed from each committee. You

can't decide that. The committees are improperly constituted as per the amended standing order. The decision as to which members are on committee must be a decision of the assembly; it cannot be the decision of the presiding officer. Therefore it is my submission that standing order 110 requires the assembly to appoint new standing committees, since the existing committees are clearly in violation of the rules of the assembly which have taken place immediately. The new standing committees then will be required to select new chairs of committees, new vice-chairs of committees and new subcommittees. Until such time as that happens, I don't see how the committees can function. Therefore the amendment to standing order 110 which is now in effect makes the existing committees null and void.

So this afternoon I am seeking clarification from you. I would hope you can be of assistance. If I am correct, then the committees are no longer in existence, they have to be reconstituted by the House, and they cannot function until that is done.

**1700**

**The Speaker:** Any more points of order on this one?

**Hon David Johnson:** I would just bring to your attention that in October 1995, the then Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations moved, and it was carried, a motion that overrode standing order 110(a) for the duration of the 36th Parliament, which would indicate that the standing committee or select committee could consist of not more than 14 members. That motion is still in effect today, and as a result of that motion, the standing committees or select committees can consist of up to 14 members. That was a motion noted in Hansard of October 17, 1995, and I believe that addresses the concern of the House leader.

**Ms Lankin:** I would just like to briefly respond to the government House leader's intervention on this point of order. I suggest that it would be a bizarre interpretation that a motion of the House to supersede standing order 110(a) in October of some previous year would remain in force when we have just passed a motion which substantively changes that rule of the standing orders. As you know, the previous standing order that was in effect at the time the October motion was passed stated that there could be no more than 13 members on a committee, and we said notwithstanding that, this House is going to increase that to 14.

The rules that the government has just rammed through this Legislature, and we would say without proper discussion, without proper debate, without understanding the consequences yet again, have now said — a substantive change in that — that there shall be no more than nine members on a committee. It's inconceivable that at the time this Legislative Assembly and the members of this House passed a motion to say notwithstanding the standing orders of the House we're going to do something different, we could have known that in two years' time the government would have changed those rules.

I think the motion that we have passed today, the changing in the rules, must be interpreted as taking precedence, and the inevitable result of that is that the committees are no longer properly constituted and, as my colleague from Algoma has said, must be reconstituted.

The counterargument would be that the committees remain in effect for the duration of the 36th Parliament, and while I would perhaps appreciate that, given that I disagree with this government's rule change, you know that is not the intent of the motion that was just passed in this House. The intent of the motion is to change that rule to downsize committees; in fact, in the case of the New Democratic Party, to take away representation where we have only two members on committees and limit us to only one. I have a lot of concerns about it, so I might like that motion of October to remain for the entire Parliament, but that's not the case and that's not the intent.

The intent is to change that rule. That must now take precedence unless this House passes another motion notwithstanding the rule. In any event, if those committees are now not properly constituted, there must be motions brought forward to reconstitute the committee membership, to reconstitute the subcommittees, to reconstitute the chairs and vice-chairs of those committees before committees can meet and continue to do any work in this Legislative Assembly.

**Hon David Johnson:** If the issue is, does the government intend to reconstitute the committees, then yes, indeed. The government has already made inquiries to the other two parties, and the other two parties have not come forward with their members in terms of reconstituting. The government intends to deal with that.

The fact remains that there is a motion on record in this House that indicates that notwithstanding standing order 110(a), which I understand is still standing order 110(a), for the duration of the 36th Parliament, no standing or select committee shall consist of more than 14 members. There is not a standing or select committee that consists of more than 14 members, and it's certainly not the intention of the government that there would be.

It is the intention of the government that the membership of the committees would be reconstituted at the earliest convenience and would constitute nine members, but that would be in conformance with both the motion that was passed on October 17, 1995, which we believe is in effect, and in conformance with the procedures approved by this Legislature. Indeed, nine is less than or equal to both nine and 14. The government is moving on that front. With the cooperation of the opposition members we will have that dealt with forthwith. We've already approached the opposition members in that regard.

**Mr Wildman:** With respect, Mr Speaker, I think you have two possible decisions. One could be to agree with the government House leader's view that the motion that was passed by the House in October 1995 amending the previous standing order 110, or superseding it, is still in effect. That says, "until the end of this Parliament," in which case I guess the committees would continue as they are until the end of the Parliament. That's not anyone's intention. It's certainly not the government House leader's

intention. But if you wish to rule that way, I suppose we could all live with that.

The other choice you have before you is to not just accept the view of the government House leader that at some point in the near future we will be willing to reconstitute the committees, but that we must reconstitute the committees, because the standing order has been amended and takes precedence not only over the previous standing order which it replaces, but the motion that was passed under that standing order.

It would be impossible for you to tell us which of the 13 members who are now on those committees are still on the committees. Which nine of those 13 will remain on the committee? You cannot tell us if those nine members, when the committees are reconstituted, will choose the same person to be Chair and Vice-Chair. You can't tell us that.

It's my view that the committees must be reconstituted. We can't just have these committees that were set up under the previous motion and the previous order continue until that happens; they must be reconstituted immediately to comply with the new standing order, which according to the government motion takes effect immediately.

**The Speaker:** Again, I don't want to cut anyone off from points of order. I understand the Liberals haven't had one yet and I'm very interested in hearing them. I think I have a very good understanding of the issue. If you want to make it quick, I'd appreciate it.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Just to coincide with what's been said earlier by the House leader for the third party, the government could very easily have taken itself out of this position if in the amendments that have just been passed it had simply said, "Notwithstanding the motion that was passed in October 1995," which in effect was a notwithstanding clause to 110, "the committees will function until a certain period of time, at which point in time they will be reconstituted with nine members." It's the government motion that we just dealt with. They may pass it off and say, "The ideas came from another party," and that sort of stuff, but that's immaterial. It's the government's motion. They are the ones who are causing the uncertainty about this current situation.

It seems to me that they can't have it both ways. The motion that was passed back in October 1995 was quite explicit. It dealt with rule 110, which talks about a committee being made up of 11 members. To now say we somehow can superimpose the new rule 110 and substitute nine members instead of the 11 members that were in that particular motion, to my way of thinking is an absurdity. They can't have it both ways.

They want, according to what was just passed, a committee with only nine members immediately. That's what's there. Those are the standing orders that we passed today, not another motion: committees with nine people. If there are committees of the House currently with 14 members, those committees are not functioning legally until they're reconstituted.

**Ms Lankin:** I will be brief. I only have one more point that I would like you to take into consideration, Mr Speaker, and I'm sure it's complex, as we're asking you to interpret what actually takes precedence at this point in time. There was a previous standing order 110; there was a "notwithstanding" motion to that; and now there has been a rule change to 110. I would argue that not only has there been a rule change to 110, but there has been a specific reference in the motion that we passed as to when that rule comes into effect.

The government House leader is arguing that the "notwithstanding" motion with regard to the previous rule 110 remains in effect until a new motion is passed in this House to reconstitute committees. I would point out to you, on the bottom of page 16 of the original motion pointed to today, we've already talked about the fact that the amendments will come in at midnight. But it does say in that, "except the amendment to standing order 110." It's very clear in the next sentence: "That amendment to standing order 110 take effect on the third sessional day after August 1, 1997, that the House meets." That day is today. This specific motion which was passed by the majority of the House and is the expression of the majority of the House must take precedence over a "notwithstanding" motion passed by this House at an earlier time.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, there's just one point I want to make that perhaps I haven't stressed enough. The motion in October 1995, which says, "Notwithstanding standing order 110(a), and for the duration of the 36th Parliament, no standing or select committee shall consist of more than 14 members," that motion I think is very clear. It doesn't say, "notwithstanding standing order 110(a) as it is written at this present time." It doesn't say, "notwithstanding standing order 110(a) unless 110(a) is changed," or changed from 11 to nine, or anything of that nature. It makes it clear that it's "notwithstanding standing order 110(a)." There was a 110(a) then; there's a 110(a) today. They both pertain to exactly the same situation; they pertain to exactly the same issue. They both give the government, in conjunction with the opposition parties, the ability to have up to 14 members, and that should still be in effect. That's a motion that was passed by this Parliament, by the members of this House. There's no reason on earth to believe that that should not be in effect today.

Now through the new standing orders, the government does have the ability at some future time to go down to nine, but the government may want the ability to proceed with nine members at this point on some committees, may want at some point the ability during this session, during this Parliament, to have 11 or 12 or 13 members on a committee. This motion, which was passed, still gives the government that opportunity. At the present time, we're in compliance with this motion, which I submit to you has to be still in effect.

**The Speaker:** Thanks to the members for their submissions. I shall take a brief recess of 15 minutes.

*The House recessed from 1715 to 1751.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you for the submissions from all the members of the House.

Let me first deal with the status of the October 17, 1995, motion respecting committee membership. As I see it, the question before us is, can that motion be superseded? It can, if a subsequent motion either rescinds it, amends it or sets it aside by way of a "notwithstanding" clause.

In my view, the motion to amend the standing orders passed by this House today does none of those things. The motion applies to the duration of this Parliament regardless of what changes may be made to standing order 110. The whole House has expressed an order that despite the general provision of the standing order for this Parliament, there is a specific provision for the size of committees, which differs.

Therefore, the application of standing order 110 has been suspended. Unless and until there is a superseding motion passed by this House, that order stands and the committees are properly constituted at this time and for the life of this Parliament.

## SUPPLY ACT, 1997

## LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 1997

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 143, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the Public Service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 1997 / Projet de loi 143, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 1997.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Further debate?

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I want to take the opportunity today to debate the motion on interim supply and talk about it in the broader perspective of the government's overall financial policy, economic policy, and how it has treated the finances of the province of Ontario.

There is no doubt that Ontario had a debt and deficit crisis when the current government took office in 1995 and there is no doubt that any government would have had to have dealt in a meaningful way with those problems.

The question then becomes, how do you deal with them and what is an appropriate policy? What is a policy that will deal with the deficit, allow for reasonable maintenance of programs and services and at the same time allow the economy to function in a manner that will serve the broad public interest?

We have seen in the two years a very clear policy with respect to this, a two-pronged policy, if you will. The first part of the policy is severe cuts to government expenditures, recognizing that no government can continue to run the kind of deficits that were run subsequent to 1990. The second part of that policy was of course the tax cut, the tax cut that I believe was designed by its architects to respond to what was acknowledged to be the drag associated with the government contracting its own expenditures, the principle being that the tax cut would put money in the pockets of consumers and investors, and they in turn would invest in the economy and those investments would generate new government revenues, new growth in the economy itself, help to deal with unemployment and help to deal, in turn, with the government's deficit and eventually, when that deficit is eliminated, the debt.

We know and we believe that part of the program is wrong. The tax cut does not stimulate. The tax cut adds to the government's deficit approximately $20 billion over the life of this government, while it's in office, the debt that the people of this province will pay the interest on, and the interest in turn compounds. We believe the more prudent approach would have been to forsake the tax cut until the budget was balanced. Why? Twofold: (1) You're not increasing the debt at as quick a rate as you have been otherwise; and (2) you will be in a balanced budget position more quickly. What we know and most economists are saying is that as governments balance their budgets and we get into surpluses, the growth, the surpluses will compound as quickly as the deficits and debts did in prior years.

The objective should and ought to be to first deal with the deficit, and in our view Ontario could have had a balanced budget much more quickly. We could have been in a situation where the billions of dollars that we've cut in a variety of programs would not have had to occur and we could have been in a situation where Ontario would be on the road to fiscal recovery more quickly.

Interestingly, the federal government for the last two months has registered budgetary surpluses. For the first time, the federal government this year will be able to finance its deficit from its own cash reserves; that is, no more borrowing. That has the effect of lowering interest rates. So as we debate supply I think we need to keep in mind that the Tory policy with respect to deficit reduction and eventually debt reduction fails miserably and skews results to those who are least able to afford them.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments? The member for St Andrew-St Patrick.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I move second reading of Bill 143, An Act to authorize the payment of certain —

**The Speaker:** Pardon me, member for St Andrew-St Patrick; these are questions and comments.

Questions and comments? Further debate? Member for St Andrew-St Patrick.

**Ms Bassett:** I move second reading of Bill 143, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the Public Service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 1997.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye." All those opposed, please say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent to move to third reading of the bill this afternoon.

**The Speaker:** Consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the Public Service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 1997 / Projet de loi 143, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 1997.

**Hon David Johnson:** We're in third reading now?

**The Speaker:** Yes, we are.

**Hon David Johnson:** Then I think the agreement was that it's now 6 of the clock.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** It's not; it's only 5:58.

**Hon David Johnson:** The agreement was a little bit tangled this afternoon, I admit, but I think the agreement was — and I'm looking at the other two House leaders — that we were to get into third reading —

**The Speaker:** Okay, I can see it as 6 of the clock, so I do. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 11 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

# CONTENTS

## Wednesday 20 August 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Chief Charles Fox**
Mr Miclash ..... 11363
**Government policy**
Mr Len Wood ..... 11363
**World Horseshoe Pitching Championship**
Mr Wettlaufer ..... 11363
**Assistance to flood victims**
Mr Crozier ..... 11364
**School trustees**
Mr Wildman ..... 11364
**Voice mail**
Mr McLean ..... 11364
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bradley ..... 11364
**Highway closure**
Mr Bisson ..... 11365
**Rockwell International**
Mr Grimmett ..... 11365

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Youth employment**
Mr Snobelen ..... 11365
Mr Hodgson ..... 11366
Mr Villeneuve ..... 11366
Mr Saunderson ..... 11367
Mrs Pupatello ..... 11367
Mrs McLeod ..... 11368
Ms Lankin ..... 11368
Ms Martel ..... 11368

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Home care**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11368
Mr Wilson ..... 11369
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Phillips ..... 11369, 11372
Mr Harris ..... 11369, 11371, 11374
Mr Hampton ..... 11370, 11374
Mr Harnick ..... 11372
**Fish habitat**
Ms Martel ..... 11372
Mr Hodgson ..... 11373
**Ontario economy**
Mr Martiniuk ..... 11373
Mr Saunderson ..... 11373
**Municipal taxation**
Mr Gerretsen ..... 11374
Mr Harris ..... 11374
Mrs McLeod ..... 11374
**Housing policy**
Mr Ouellette ..... 11375
Mr Leach ..... 11375
**Highway 407**
Mr Duncan ..... 11375
Mr Palladini ..... 11375
**Municipal restructuring**
Ms Lankin ..... 11376
Mr Leach ..... 11376
**Long-term care**
Mr Baird ..... 11377
Mr Wilson ..... 11377

### PETITIONS

**Standing orders reform**
Mr Sergio ..... 11377
Mr Bradley ..... 11379
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Wildman ..... 11377
**Adoption**
Mr Klees ..... 11378
**Prescription drugs**
Mr Miclash ..... 11378
**Environmental protection**
Ms Churley ..... 11378
**Court decision**
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11379
Mr Leadston ..... 11380
**Assistance to Northern Ontario**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11379
**Labour legislation**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11379
**Casinos**
Mr Tascona ..... 11379
**Women's College Hospital**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11380
**Protection of privacy**
Mr Miclash ..... 11380

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

**Standing Committee on government agencies**
Mr Miclash ..... 11380
Report deemed adopted ..... 11380

### FIRST READINGS

**Lynde Marsh Protection Act, 1997,**
Bill 151, *Mr Flaherty*
Mr Flaherty ..... 11380
Agreed to ..... 11380

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

**Standing orders reform, government notice of motion number 24,**
*Mr David Johnson*
Agreed to ..... 11381
**Standing orders reform, government motion,**
*Mr David Johnson*
Mr David Johnson ..... 11382
Mr Baird ..... 11384
Mr Bradley ..... 11384
Mr Wildman ..... 11387
Agreed to ..... 11390

### SECOND READINGS

**Supply Act, 1997**
Bill 143, *Mr Eves*
Mr Duncan ..... 11394
Ms Bassett ..... 11395
Agreed to ..... 11395

### THIRD READINGS

**Supply Act, 1997**
Bill 143, *Mr Eves*
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11395


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mercredi 20 août 1997


### DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

**Emplois pour les jeunes**
M. Villeneuve ..... 11366

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la protection de Lynde Marsh,** projet de loi 151,
*M. Flaherty* ..... 11380

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de crédits de 1997,**
projet de loi 143, *M. Eves*
Adoptée ..... 11395

### TROISIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de crédits de 1997,**
projet de loi 143, *M. Eves*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11395

A Z CN
X1
-1223

Government
Publications




No. 217

Nº 217

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Thursday 21 August 1997**

**Jeudi 21 août 1997**

LIBRARY
AUG 26 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 août 1997

*The House met at 1102.*
*Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### COAT OF ARMS

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I move that in the opinion of this House, Ontario's coat of arms, like those of the majority of Canada's provinces, should feature the royal crown and other suitable heraldic devices, thus completing this official representation of our system of government.

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requests that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in Council petition the Canadian Heraldic Authority to augment Ontario's coat of arms with the embellishments to which it is entitled.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Jordan:** It is a great privilege for me to stand in the House today to discuss my private member's resolution to augment Ontario's coat of arms.

It has been said that symbols speak. All cultures and nations throughout history have had and continue to have their special symbols by which people remind themselves of their personal and group identities.

Coats of arms were originally jackets with symbolic designs on them that indicated to others the authority in which name the person wearing it was acting. It also indicated national, cultural and religious significance and meaning. Such jackets were often worn by soldiers going into battle to allow one side to determine who belonged to the enemy side. From the idea of a heraldic jacket comes the familiar term "Union Jack," since that design was also worn in like manner.

This is what the coat of arms of Ontario represents today. It is a symbol of authority or, to be precise, it is the arms of the Queen in and for the province of Ontario. It represents the crown as the source of authority within our system of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.

The arms of Ontario have undergone significant amendment before and after Confederation in 1867. If we look immediately behind the Speaker's chair in this chamber we see a representation of the coat of arms of Great Britain. The arms of Great Britain, which were once universal in all colonies and countries that were once part of the British Empire, continue to figure prominently in the Great Seal of Ontario as well. But those arms do not represent Britain in the first instance. They represent rather the authority of the crown as the source of the rule of law, the guarantor of the protection of the rights of citizens and the fount of all honour.

In 1867, the province of Ontario was created as a part of the Dominion of Canada, along with the provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The shield of Ontario, consisting of three gold maple leaves on a field of green, surmounted by the cross of St George, was granted by Queen Victoria on May 26, 1868. On February 27, 1909, King Edward VII augmented the shield with a green and gold crest with a black bear above the shield and supporters in the form of a moose and a deer.

The loyalist motto was also granted at that time. In Latin, the motto reads: "Loyal In The Beginning, So Remaining." The arms of Ontario are also the only arms in Canada to be stylized, which means the arms are not open to individual interpretation by artists.

Although never officially codified, the meanings of the heraldic emblems have been interpreted variously. The black bear and the supporters, moose and deer, can represent our first nations and the richness and beauty of Ontario's natural environment. The three maple leaves can represent the French, English and multicultural communities of Ontario and their ongoing contributions to our society, like those of the first nations peoples. The cross on white represents the binational source of our parliamentary democratic traditions and constitutional monarchy.

Red and white are the historic colours of England and France and these colours were used interchangeably by both countries over the last 1,000 years. In the first instance, the St George's banner represents the parliamentary tradition of Britain as first established by Simon de Montfort who, in the 13th century, helped establish the first Parliament in England, along with the formation and signing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede.

As an interesting aside, when we as members of this chamber bow towards the Speaker's chair, we are not in fact bowing to anything that is here in this House. The first Parliament in England was conducted at Westminster in a church. The altar was removed to make room for the Speaker's chair. When members of the early House left or entered the chamber they bowed to the consecrated spot on which the Speaker's chair stood. To this day, we in all

parliaments of the Commonwealth show our historic unity with that first Parliament at Westminster by bowing in the same manner.

**1110**

Unlike the Canadian coat of arms, however, the Ontario coat of arms does not have a crown. As a matter of fact, it has only been in the last 20 years or so that crowns have been added to provincial coats of arms in Canada. The exception to the rule is the province of Quebec, which in 1939 had its shield augmented with a crown to signify the special protection that Quebec cultural, religious and political rights enjoy under the authority of the crown. It is important to note that the people of Quebec have always referred to their royal past to establish and maintain their cultural identity.

Since the 1980s the co-sovereignty of the province has in fact been recognized, so the provinces have successfully applied for the augmentations to which they are entitled.

We all remember the great example that was set in this regard by a former Speaker of this assembly, David Warner. In addition to his House duties, that Speaker was very committed to the parliamentary process and to Commonwealth activities. It was under him that the coat of arms for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario was granted in this House in 1992 to honour the 100th anniversary of this building and the 200th anniversary of the opening of the first Ontario Parliament by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe.

I submit before all members of this House that the time has come for Ontario to join the other provinces in augmenting its coat of arms to represent our province's co-sovereignty within Confederation, as well as to celebrate our 130th anniversary as a province that was founded by French royalists and the United Empire Loyalists. The augmentation of the coat of arms of Ontario, like the granting of arms for this Legislative Assembly, would be an appropriate way to celebrate our great provincial heritage and the landmark anniversaries that we observe this year. Finally, it would underscore our co-sovereignty as a province and multicultural society.

At this time, special mention should be given to Alex Roman, a loyal and devoted monarchist. Alex has been invaluable in the assistance he has given this resolution. His hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed. I would like to ask Alex, Mr Arthur Bousfield, vice-chair of the Monarchist League, and Mr Garry Toffoli, the Ontario chairman of the Monarchist League, to please stand. They are with us, and with them are my staff members Pat deCouto and Matthew MaGuire, who also worked very hard to put this together.

I also want to thank all my honourable colleagues in the House for this opportunity to present my resolution, and I would ask for your enthusiastic support for it. Thank you. God save the Queen.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I'm very pleased to join this debate, but before doing so, I must say that I am somewhat surprised by the kinds of motions that government members particularly have brought forward during private members' business. I realize it's an opportunity for us to bring forward whatever item is of particular urgency to that particular member, and I realize the importance of this particular resolution.

But look at everything that's going on in this province over the last couple of years and the tremendous havoc out there as far as the public services are concerned. Look at the fact that hospitals are in great chaos because the government is about to close 20 or 30 hospitals throughout this province, and the tremendous concern that the people of Ontario have about their health care and about the alternative care and the community care facilities and services that need to be out there. Look at what's happening to the education system as well, where we're throwing out the governance structure for the educational system in Ontario that predates Confederation, that predates municipal government. School boards have been in Ontario since 1837 and form an integral part of this province, but we are basically doing away with that system because we're not giving school boards any power whatsoever under the new proposed act; the power to tax has been done away with and the boards have become such large, humongous boards that you probably won't find people who want to serve on them because of the travel that will be required. Look at what's happening to the municipal infrastructure in this province, where municipality after municipality is saying, "If we have the current downloading provisions from the province handed on down to us, then the municipal taxpayers will have to just pay more and more so we can all somehow afford Mike Harris's provincial tax cut." When you look at all that, you wonder why a resolution like this is before us.

I'm going to support this particular resolution — let me say that — because I believe it is important. I am a great believer in history and in the heritage of this province and from where we started and from whence we've come. I think our symbols ought to reflect that. In terms of the symbolism of endorsing the notion of a crown on our coat of arms, I totally believe in it and will be supporting.

It also gives us an opportunity to think of the tremendous contribution that the United Empire Loyalists have made to this province. I know most people out there think the United Empire Loyalists were all strictly from Anglo-Saxon stock. This gives us an opportunity to indicate to people that many of the United Empire Loyalists were ex-slaves, and many were immigrants from different countries who had come to the United States but wanted to remain loyal to the crown and settled particularly in eastern Ontario and in the riding the member from Lanark represents and in my own riding of Kingston and The Islands. The United Empire Loyalists have made a tremendous contribution to that part of Ontario and indeed to the entire province. Many of our early leaders of all political persuasions, and not only in the political field but also in the field of industry and the field of education and in every other aspect of our daily life, came from United Empire Loyalist stock or were United Empire Loyalists who came to this province more than 200 years ago.

I intend to support this particular resolution. I have the highest respect for the member for Lanark-Renfrew. I re-

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 août 1997

*The House met at 1102.*
*Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### COAT OF ARMS

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I move that in the opinion of this House, Ontario's coat of arms, like those of the majority of Canada's provinces, should feature the royal crown and other suitable heraldic devices, thus completing this official representation of our system of government.

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requests that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in Council petition the Canadian Heraldic Authority to augment Ontario's coat of arms with the embellishments to which it is entitled.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Jordan:** It is a great privilege for me to stand in the House today to discuss my private member's resolution to augment Ontario's coat of arms.

It has been said that symbols speak. All cultures and nations throughout history have had and continue to have their special symbols by which people remind themselves of their personal and group identities.

Coats of arms were originally jackets with symbolic designs on them that indicated to others the authority in which name the person wearing it was acting. It also indicated national, cultural and religious significance and meaning. Such jackets were often worn by soldiers going into battle to allow one side to determine who belonged to the enemy side. From the idea of a heraldic jacket comes the familiar term "Union Jack," since that design was also worn in like manner.

This is what the coat of arms of Ontario represents today. It is a symbol of authority or, to be precise, it is the arms of the Queen in and for the province of Ontario. It represents the crown as the source of authority within our system of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.

The arms of Ontario have undergone significant amendment before and after Confederation in 1867. If we look immediately behind the Speaker's chair in this chamber we see a representation of the coat of arms of Great Britain. The arms of Great Britain, which were once universal in all colonies and countries that were once part of the British Empire, continue to figure prominently in the Great Seal of Ontario as well. But those arms do not represent Britain in the first instance. They represent rather the authority of the crown as the source of the rule of law, the guarantor of the protection of the rights of citizens and the fount of all honour.

In 1867, the province of Ontario was created as a part of the Dominion of Canada, along with the provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The shield of Ontario, consisting of three gold maple leaves on a field of green, surmounted by the cross of St George, was granted by Queen Victoria on May 26, 1868. On February 27, 1909, King Edward VII augmented the shield with a green and gold crest with a black bear above the shield and supporters in the form of a moose and a deer.

The loyalist motto was also granted at that time. In Latin, the motto reads: "Loyal In The Beginning, So Remaining." The arms of Ontario are also the only arms in Canada to be stylized, which means the arms are not open to individual interpretation by artists.

Although never officially codified, the meanings of the heraldic emblems have been interpreted variously. The black bear and the supporters, moose and deer, can represent our first nations and the richness and beauty of Ontario's natural environment. The three maple leaves can represent the French, English and multicultural communities of Ontario and their ongoing contributions to our society, like those of the first nations peoples. The cross on white represents the binational source of our parliamentary democratic traditions and constitutional monarchy.

Red and white are the historic colours of England and France and these colours were used interchangeably by both countries over the last 1,000 years. In the first instance, the St George's banner represents the parliamentary tradition of Britain as first established by Simon de Montfort who, in the 13th century, helped establish the first Parliament in England, along with the formation and signing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede.

As an interesting aside, when we as members of this chamber bow towards the Speaker's chair, we are not in fact bowing to anything that is here in this House. The first Parliament in England was conducted at Westminster in a church. The altar was removed to make room for the Speaker's chair. When members of the early House left or entered the chamber they bowed to the consecrated spot on which the Speaker's chair stood. To this day, we in all

parliaments of the Commonwealth show our historic unity with that first Parliament at Westminster by bowing in the same manner.

**1110**

Unlike the Canadian coat of arms, however, the Ontario coat of arms does not have a crown. As a matter of fact, it has only been in the last 20 years or so that crowns have been added to provincial coats of arms in Canada. The exception to the rule is the province of Quebec, which in 1939 had its shield augmented with a crown to signify the special protection that Quebec cultural, religious and political rights enjoy under the authority of the crown. It is important to note that the people of Quebec have always referred to their royal past to establish and maintain their cultural identity.

Since the 1980s the co-sovereignty of the province has in fact been recognized, so the provinces have successfully applied for the augmentations to which they are entitled.

We all remember the great example that was set in this regard by a former Speaker of this assembly, David Warner. In addition to his House duties, that Speaker was very committed to the parliamentary process and to Commonwealth activities. It was under him that the coat of arms for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario was granted in this House in 1992 to honour the 100th anniversary of this building and the 200th anniversary of the opening of the first Ontario Parliament by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe.

I submit before all members of this House that the time has come for Ontario to join the other provinces in augmenting its coat of arms to represent our province's co-sovereignty within Confederation, as well as to celebrate our 130th anniversary as a province that was founded by French royalists and the United Empire Loyalists. The augmentation of the coat of arms of Ontario, like the granting of arms for this Legislative Assembly, would be an appropriate way to celebrate our great provincial heritage and the landmark anniversaries that we observe this year. Finally, it would underscore our co-sovereignty as a province and multicultural society.

At this time, special mention should be given to Alex Roman, a loyal and devoted monarchist. Alex has been invaluable in the assistance he has given this resolution. His hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed. I would like to ask Alex, Mr Arthur Bousfield, vice-chair of the Monarchist League, and Mr Garry Toffoli, the Ontario chairman of the Monarchist League, to please stand. They are with us, and with them are my staff members Pat deCouto and Matthew MaGuire, who also worked very hard to put this together.

I also want to thank all my honourable colleagues in the House for this opportunity to present my resolution, and I would ask for your enthusiastic support for it. Thank you. God save the Queen.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I'm very pleased to join this debate, but before doing so, I must say that I am somewhat surprised by the kinds of motions that government members particularly have brought forward during private members' business. I realize it's an opportunity for us to bring forward whatever item is of particular urgency to that particular member, and I realize the importance of this particular resolution.

But look at everything that's going on in this province over the last couple of years and the tremendous havoc out there as far as the public services are concerned. Look at the fact that hospitals are in great chaos because the government is about to close 20 or 30 hospitals throughout this province, and the tremendous concern that the people of Ontario have about their health care and about the alternative care and the community care facilities and services that need to be out there. Look at what's happening to the education system as well, where we're throwing out the governance structure for the educational system in Ontario that predates Confederation, that predates municipal government. School boards have been in Ontario since 1837 and form an integral part of this province, but we are basically doing away with that system because we're not giving school boards any power whatsoever under the new proposed act; the power to tax has been done away with and the boards have become such large, humongous boards that you probably won't find people who want to serve on them because of the travel that will be required. Look at what's happening to the municipal infrastructure in this province, where municipality after municipality is saying, "If we have the current downloading provisions from the province handed on down to us, then the municipal taxpayers will have to just pay more and more so we can all somehow afford Mike Harris's provincial tax cut." When you look at all that, you wonder why a resolution like this is before us.

I'm going to support this particular resolution — let me say that — because I believe it is important. I am a great believer in history and in the heritage of this province and from where we started and from whence we've come. I think our symbols ought to reflect that. In terms of the symbolism of endorsing the notion of a crown on our coat of arms, I totally believe in it and will be supporting.

It also gives us an opportunity to think of the tremendous contribution that the United Empire Loyalists have made to this province. I know most people out there think the United Empire Loyalists were all strictly from Anglo-Saxon stock. This gives us an opportunity to indicate to people that many of the United Empire Loyalists were ex-slaves, and many were immigrants from different countries who had come to the United States but wanted to remain loyal to the crown and settled particularly in eastern Ontario and in the riding the member from Lanark represents and in my own riding of Kingston and The Islands. The United Empire Loyalists have made a tremendous contribution to that part of Ontario and indeed to the entire province. Many of our early leaders of all political persuasions, and not only in the political field but also in the field of industry and the field of education and in every other aspect of our daily life, came from United Empire Loyalist stock or were United Empire Loyalists who came to this province more than 200 years ago.

I intend to support this particular resolution. I have the highest respect for the member for Lanark-Renfrew. I re-

alize he's one of the senior members of this House and he has much wisdom in the number of years he has spent in public life, not only in this particular forum but also in other forums. I urge him to speak to his cabinet colleagues — he's got much greater influence there than I have as a member of the opposition — and ask them to review some of these matters they're bringing forward in education and in the health care field. Let us make sure this province remains a province of opportunity, educational opportunity, and a province where people are dealt with equally and fairly when it comes to our health care system. That's the underlying aspect of this province. That's the way it has always been under governments in the past.

When you think of the governments of Bill Davis and John Robarts and the Conservative dynasty of 42 years, regardless of what else may be said, most people felt they always governed with a sense of fairness. I think we're losing that in this province right now. Some people think the changes are going too fast, and some people think that particularly those who are vulnerable in our society are not being adequately protected. I certainly happen to believe that. If you're vulnerable, then the notion that the government will somehow protect your rights and interests is rapidly disappearing with the current government. So I ask the member to talk to your cabinet colleagues about that, and let's temper some of those changes that you're bringing in this province, and indeed reverse them. But I will be supporting this resolution. I think it's very important that we respect the heritage and culture, all of what made Ontario what it is today. Certainly the United Empire Loyalists and the crown have played an extremely large part in that.

**1120**

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** With the amount of effort and work that has gone into bringing forward a resolution of this kind, I'd like to congratulate the member on his efforts in making changes to the coat of arms. In some of the background material we see that other provinces, with the exception of three, have over the years made changes to their coat of arms and have a crown on the coat of arms.

I'm just wondering about the actual cost of making this change. At a time when we see in the last two years a reduction in every service that the people of Ontario have been receiving, should we be spending the millions of dollars it's going to take to make that change at this particular point in time?

I'm in favour of protecting all of our natural heritage that we have out there, including the wildlife, the fish, the spawning beds for the fish and all of this to make sure this environment is there for my children and my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren. These are the areas that we should be spending the dollars on. We should be spending dollars to make sure we have a proper health care system, a good education system, that the municipalities are not going to have to increase property taxes as a result of cutbacks that have taken place over the last couple of years.

Myself and my colleagues have no problem with this particular resolution, but it touches at the heart of the actual dollars. I have no problem with putting this to a committee and working with the member for Lanark-Renfrew, Mr Jordan, on coming up with something. He's given us all kinds of information and mock-up emblems on how the coat of arms would look with a crown on it, and he should be congratulated on that.

But at a time, as I said before, when we're going through a revolution that started two years ago and that revolution is taking its toll throughout this province, I would have thought the private members in the Conservative caucus would be bringing forward resolutions and motions to let the Conservative caucus and Conservative cabinet ministers know the anger and frustration that is out there in this province, the anger and frustration against this government, especially the Premier, that they would be bringing forth resolutions and motions to slow this down. I understand that there are all kinds of cartoons being produced by daily newspapers that reflect the general population that it's moving too fast and in the wrong direction in a lot of cases.

As I said before, municipalities, health care, education, a lot of these other services, services for the seniors — instead of raising taxes on seniors, raising taxes on property owners, raising taxes for everybody else out there to give a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in this province, these are the items that the people in this province and the people that I represent, my constituents, want me to talk about and that I'm sure they want the Conservative members to talk about.

We're at the point now where this government is so much off the track that they had to call a special emergency sitting of the Legislature to make sure they can ram through more legislation so they can go ahead with municipal elections, they can go ahead with school board elections, because without the sitting that started last Monday, this province would be completely falling apart.

They've been unable to implement the legislation that they wanted to in the two-year period so that they would prepare themselves for the municipal elections that are normally held in November. Some of them now are probably going to have to be postponed until 1999 because the legislation is not completed. We see that this government could be brought back on track if the backbenchers and the cabinet ministers would listen to the general population out there.

As I said at the beginning, I have no problem in supporting this particular resolution on revising and updating the coat of arms, but there are a lot of other important issues out there: women and children in this province, the seniors who want to hear from the Conservative government on how they're going to be treated and dealt with in the future —

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My understanding is that the member should be speaking to the resolution. He's talking on everything but the resolution.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I agree.

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you, and thank you for the interjection. The coat of arms is very important. As our lead

speaker said, there's an emblem behind the Speaker. The coat of arms stands for a lot out there in this province. But there are a lot of other issues that should be dealt with, and I'm sure there are going to be some other speakers who are going to touch on them as we go through this one-hour debate on changing the coat of arms by putting a crown on it, as some of the other provinces have done.

But I must go back to some of the other issues that are out there that are very scary and very damaging to a lot of the people in this province who would like to see other issues debated, whether it be in private members' hour or whether it be during question period or whether it be during committee public hearings, rather than dealing with an issue such as this at this point in time.

I will leave some of my time to my colleague, and if he has some time, we'll give it to the other party. But as I said at the beginning, I will be supporting this particular resolution and hopefully all members in this Legislature will be supporting it.

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** I'm pleased to stand in the House today in support of the resolution brought forward by my colleague the honourable member for Lanark-Renfrew. I congratulate my colleague for what I believe is a long-overdue completion of the Ontario coat of arms. This is especially true when we see that most of the provinces in the Dominion of Canada have augmented their arms. As the member for Lanark-Renfrew has said, their co-sovereignty with the federal government is in place.

I echo my colleague's view. This being the 500th anniversary of the arrival of John Cabot bearing the royal standard of the crown and the 130th anniversary of Ontario in Confederation, there is no better moment in our history to fully complete our provincial coat of arms.

The enduring role of the crown in our past, present and future is one that should definitely be celebrated. As the member for Simcoe East, I am proud to represent a riding named for the first Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe was responsible for directly implementing the great legacy of the rule of law and administration under the authority of the crown.

That legacy included the outlawing of slavery in Upper Canada. We were 50 years ahead of Britain and 75 years ahead of the United States.

That legacy included the passage of the Constitution Act, which defined and protected the cultural, political and religious rights of Lower Canada and Quebec.

That legacy included the parliamentary system of government that has guided Ontario's development into one of the world's most progressive societies, where multicultural diversity is celebrated and shared by all citizens: this thanks to the open, international cultural focus that the crown and the Commonwealth have afforded us.

Simcoe was indeed one of the great founding fathers of our province. He is more than deserving of a day in his honour, and I know that my colleague the member for Scarborough East is working on his private member's bill to declare Simcoe Day on the first Monday of August. I know all members of this House will want to support him in that important endeavour.

A completed coat of arms for Ontario will celebrate other important themes in our province's history often overlooked or forgotten. The town of Penetanguishene in my riding is a fine example. "Penetanguishene" means "the land of the shifting sands." As one drives into the picturesque town, one sees two angels with trumpets on either side of the road. They represent the guardian angels of the province of Ontario and of the province of Quebec. The trumpeting angelic couriers stand at the entrance of a town that has probably seen more Canadian history than any other Canadian town or city west of Quebec.

**1130**

Penetanguishene was founded by none other than Samuel de Champlain, whose ship entered Penetang Bay in 1650 and who claimed the land for the French crown. The spot where he is said to have landed is marked by a white cross which is lit up at night. Less than several hundred yards away is the site of the historic Huron village of Toanchay, home to French missionaries Jean de Brébeuf and Nicolas Viel. Beginning on September 26, 1626, they wrote the first French-Huron dictionary.

In Penetanguishene, Simcoe built his famous naval and military establishments. It was there French, English, Scottish and first nations recruits volunteered to defend Canada against the American invader.

The legacy of Penetanguishene is a legacy of the crown and of our history. This resolution will, if passed, celebrate Ontario's history and future for all time. I hope the augmentations will include the badges of the United Empire Loyalists and of the Royal French, which speaks to the issue of Canadian unity both in the past and today.

In terms of cost for the augmented coat of arms, it is nominal: from $2,000 to $5,000, which pays for the administrative costs. As with the arms of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, once the certificate with the full coat of arms is issued, the use of the arms will be implemented slowly over time at the discretion of the government.

For example, the Legislative Assembly coat of arms has yet to be represented widely. Here in the Legislative Building there is a framed copy in the lobby. The door of the Speaker's office also displays the meaningful symbol and it is used throughout the offices of the Legislative Assembly, including the interparliamentary and public relations branch.

Should this resolution pass, no one will start ripping down existing Ontario coats of arms from buildings and walls. I draw your attention, as the member has already done, to the coat of arms behind the Speaker's chair, which is of Britain. No one could ever suggest that it be discarded in favour of the modern arms of Ontario today.

Our heritage is one that should be celebrated and honoured. The completion of the Ontario coat of arms would create an enduring monument and reminder to future generations of Ontarians. It will remind us of our early heroes and those who work today in the spirit of the motto of the Order of Canada, "Desiring a better country."

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I would like to, first of all, welcome our guests to the chamber and recognize their interest in the resolution that we are debating here today. I would also like to commend the member for Lanark-Renfrew, as I know he has put much thought into the proposal and we've received a great amount of information. Unfortunately, I can say that I won't be supporting this resolution. As the previous speaker from Cochrane North has indicated already, there are many more issues and real concerns to my constituents.

I would suggest that if you went to any number of my constituents, you would find that this is not a real concern to them. I think the first thing they would say, if I were to go and say to them that we're looking at a change in the coat of arms, is: "Okay. What's that going to cost? Is that going to mean a cost to my son or daughter who has returned to university where they're facing increased tuition fees, where they've been out of work for most of the summer, have not been able to retain a summer job, and now we're talking about a cost going into the change of the coat of arms?"

As well, if I went to my municipalities, they would say: "Oh, there's nothing wrong with the coat of arms. We've all been very proud of that over the years. When we're faced with dumping, unloading of costs, now we're having the government here saying, 'We're going to put additional costs into the change of the coat of arms.'"

It's not a real issue among any of my constituents and it has never, ever, as long as I've been here, and I've been here longer than the member for Lanark-Renfrew, been brought to my attention from either a constituent or any member or anyone in the province for that matter.

I think what we have to look at, and again with much respect to the member, are the real issues, the real concerns that are facing the people of this province today. When we talk about closing hospitals, we have a Premier who indicated during the 1995 campaign that it was not in his plan to close hospitals. We have that on tape. We have him making that very specific statement. You would think that the member from Lanark-Renfrew would come in here and want to talk about an issue like that, an issue that would probably be as important to his constituents as it is to mine.

Education in the province of Ontario is another very important issue that I hear about on a regular basis. Rather than talking about a change to the coat of arms, I would think that's another issue the member would want want to take a look at, an issue that I hear about on a daily basis. As I indicated earlier, I have yet to hear from one constituent about the provincial coat of arms. It's not in the cards at this very juncture in the province's history.

When we talk to constituents such as nurses, such as policemen out there, such as people working in the tourist industry, they're not concerned about the coat of arms. Again, I think we have some very important issues, some very real concerns. It would have been my hope today that this member would have joined some of the other members in his caucus, such as Mr Murdoch, Mr Skarica, Mr Carr, Mr Kells, who are coming out and stating publicly what their real concerns are, what they're hearing from their constituents as they move throughout their constituency.

I would say that in bringing forth such a resolution today, when we have all these issues on the table, that some of the members are out of touch with what every day Ontarians are saying to them as members representing their ridings; the member has got to be out of touch with many of their concerns that we hear on a regular basis. We know every Thursday we have private members' resolutions come forth to this Legislature and it's a very important time. I agree that these are private members' issues that we are hearing about in our constituencies. I challenge not only this member but other members who will be bringing forth those resolutions in the future to really talk about what they're hearing in their constituencies, what they are hearing from their constituents.

It's kind of interesting that just recently we are starting to hear about some of these issues. We're finding out that it's the Tory backbenchers, the Tory MPPs, who are becoming worried now. Remember, we're almost halfway through the mandate and all of a sudden they're starting to say, "Holy cow, we've got people out there who don't agree with our policies and I have to get re-elected," and they're suggesting these are issues that are being put forth to them. The coat of arms is not one of them. I must say, that's not one of them.

When I go back to it, I think the constituents out there are more concerned as to what it's going to cost the taxpayer. "What is this going to cost? Does this mean my son or daughter will not have a summer job next year?" in one of these many beautiful programs we heard about yesterday. Then we're finding out more and more that some of them not only did not exist to the extent the ministers were telling us, but all of a sudden we're told about a coat of arms change here today in the Legislature.

I ask the member in his closing remarks to try to convince me that this is not going to be a great cost to the taxpayer. I don't think he can do that. I really don't think he can do that when we talk about this actual change and what it will do here in the province of Ontario. Again, with this government coming along with its many incoherent policies, I would have thought that the member for Lanark-Renfrew would have actually stood up today and talked a little bit more about important issues: issues important not only to his constituents but to my constituents as well.

All one has to do is actually take a look at the present coat of arms today. If you take a look at it, you see a moose, an elk, a bear. There are three animals on there that are very important to my constituents, whether it be a licence to hunt moose, the elk population, the spring bear hunt. Those are important issues represented in what I feel is a coat of arms that represents this province as we sit here today and take a look at it. One just has to take a look at the present coat of arms.

I really think that this member and other members, when it comes to private members' resolutions, Mr Galt being one of them, could maybe take a look at what they are hearing from constituents in their riding and think a

little bit more about what they might want to present in this House during this very important time.

**1140**

I think of people like a constituent of mine. Now, she hasn't received anything on the coat of arms, and I have to be fair here. I know she hasn't received anything on what the member for Lanark-Renfrew has been promoting, but she did receive a very interesting paper: Promises Made, Promises Kept, a two-year major milestone on the Harris government, sent to her by Mike Harris. It was sent to her after she had just lost her job because Mike Harris had cancelled her program. Yet Mike Harris has the gall to send this out to my constituent. Again, I can't say that she received anything from the member for Lanark-Renfrew regarding the coat of arms, but she was very upset to receive this after Mike Harris had laid her off, cut her program, cut her funding, and then had the audacity to send her out this. Promises Kept: jobs, all kinds of stuff in there, after cutting her program, laying her off and laying her fellow workers off, trying to promote to her. She has indicated to me that she has written back to the Premier saying that he had a lot of nerve in doing this. Again, I go back to the coat of arms. I must admit, I don't think she has received anything on this, but I tell you, Jacqueline Rush, who was a training consultant with skills development, would not be interested in this at this time.

Again, on principle, I cannot support this resolution in this, a very important time in our province.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I am pleased to join in the debate on this resolution. Let me say at the outset that it is my intention to support the resolution.

*Applause.*

**Mr Christopherson:** It's not very often I get applauded by the government and I don't know if I like it.

Let me say that one of the reasons I want to support this is indeed very personal. While my last name is Danish and I'm very proud of that, the birth name of my mother was Clapham, and there's a great tradition of British history on that side of my family. According to my mother — and I don't imagine anyone in this place or anywhere else is going to refute the authority of my mother or anyone else's mother — we can trace it back and there are United Empire Loyalists in the family. There are even landmarks in England that are named after the family, and it's always nice to stand up and be proud of our heritage and our background.

For all those reasons, in addition to the fact that in my riding of Hamilton Centre a large proportion of the population also has roots back to England and all of Britain, I think it's appropriate on a personal basis as well as being the elected member for that area to reflect support for this resolution, and I'm very pleased and very proud to do so.

Having said that, let me point out a couple of things. One, I note that in the background material that the sponsoring member sent out it says, "The remainder of the coat of arms is open to a definition that reflects Ontario's historical and contemporary realities." Again, to use my own riding as an example, if we look at the contemporary realities, the dynamic and the makeup of my community is changing dramatically. There are an awful lot of people whose origins are not British. The member attempts to recognize that by acknowledging it, I believe, with three leaves, one of them being English, one French and one multicultural.

In light of the fact that there is a reference to contemporary realities, I would have hoped and would have preferred that some more time could have been spent to perhaps enhance that reality more. I don't have a quick and easy answer for that, but I think it would be appropriate as our country changes and as our province changes, and certainly all of North America is changing. That diversity is as much a part of our strength as our history. I think to enhance that, in addition to the change with the crown, would not have offended anyone who likes to see the enhancement with the crown and certainly would give a much greater connection for people whose origins are not British. I know that the Brits in my riding are as proud of their neighbours who are from other countries as are those new Canadians who have come to our province and come to our community and share the benefit and the beauty of living in Hamilton. So if there's any opportunity to do that or if the member could comment on that, I'd like to hear it because I know there are a lot of my constituents who would like to know that this Legislature is as interested in the contemporary realities as we are our historical roots.

Let me also say that in all honesty I cannot recall, and if anybody wanted me to, I'd be prepared to check with my staff, receiving a single phone call in the seven years that I have been in this place asking for a change to the coat of arms. That doesn't mean it's not important — obviously, it is — but I sure get a lot of calls about a number of other matters.

I raise that because what came to my mind — and I would think it's not true, knowing the member as I do, and he's been here longer than I have — is that it almost seems like a convenient diversion, that with all the other issues we do get phone calls about and all the concerns that are out there, it's rather convenient that this hour of the Legislature can be spent talking about something that really is quite motherhood. It's not very controversial. It's not really going to affect anyone's life. Certainly, it's not going to mitigate the damage this government's agenda has done to the lives of the people I represent. I think it would have been more relevant had we seen members, in this case the member for Lanark-Renfrew, bring something that was more contemporary in terms of the quality of life of my constituents, which is falling dramatically as a result of changes this government is bringing about.

Certainly when I talk to people who are at or below the poverty line, the coat of arms is not exactly the first issue that springs from their lips as I ask them about contemporary realities. I would have been happier to be standing here talking about a private member's resolution or bill that would have enhanced their lives or, at the very least, mitigated some of the hurt and pain and loss of quality of life that is taking place in my riding.

In closing, let me return to the fact that however strongly I may feel about some of my concerns, it's the member's right to bring forward what he considers to be a priority. I respect that and will be here to participate in the vote and would recognize our guests here, to whom obviously this is very important. They deserve the attention and respect of this House in that their member brought this forward.

I will indeed be standing up and voting in favour to reflect what I think is an important part of our heritage, but would again ask the member, if he can't change what he's proposing at this time, I would very much appreciate hearing him comment on the contemporary realities of people whose origins are not British. I am just concerned that one of the three maple leaves is maybe just not enough to recognize the importance of the diversity and the strength that it gives us.

With that I will close my remarks and look forward to the rest of the debate.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I am privileged to rise today on behalf of the people of Wellington and join in today's debate on the resolution sponsored by my good friend the member for Lanark-Renfrew regarding the augmentation of Ontario's coat of arms.

I too wish to congratulate my friend for the outstanding work he does every day on behalf of the people of Lanark-Renfrew and for bringing this resolution forward at this time. I hope it sees speedy passage in the House this morning.

Of course, you might expect someone who represents a riding named for the famous Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, to be in favour of this resolution, as I am, involving as it does the completion of the Ontario coat of arms with a crown and trilliums.

**1150**

It's important to note that the adoption of our official flower grew out of a movement during the First World War to choose a national Canadian floral emblem appropriate for planting on the graves of Canadian servicemen overseas who had given their lives defending the ideals of our nation. The trillium was proposed by the Ottawa Horticultural Society for just such a purpose, but no national flower was ever chosen. It was finally adopted by the province of Ontario in 1937. As one writer of the day put it, "The three sepals and the leaves of the trillium represent the founding fathers of our nation, the aboriginal peoples, the French and the British."

So closely identified with Ontario has it become that the provincial crown of Ontario is now sometimes called the "trillium crown" to signify and express the notion of the co-sovereignty of Ontario with the federal government in Confederation.

One could ostensibly argue for the inclusion of other provincial symbols at the base of the shield of Ontario, as has been done in the rendering of the arms of other provinces such as New Brunswick and Manitoba. The amethyst, the white pine and even perhaps the common loon could be included, if it is the will of the House. The stylized version of the current coat of arms of Ontario would need to be revised and returned to its earlier naturalistic expression, as obtains in all other provincial arms, to achieve a more realistic effect in accordance with the rules of heraldry.

The people of Ontario, it can be said without exaggeration, are a community that is deeply aware and appreciative of its roots. This is why I believe the passage of today's resolution will be greeted very positively by Ontarians across the province, irrespective of their background or political affiliation.

What I'm simply suggesting is that the role of the crown and of our historic traditions is very important in general to all Ontarians, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. It is a heritage we are all fortunate to share. Those institutions and traditions are a crucial factor in Ontario's ongoing development. We cannot deny our past, nor ever should we; and we can celebrate the best of it and teach others about it, especially in our schools. Civics is an important subject for citizens of all nations to learn, and it has sometimes been said that we in Canada have tended to neglect it.

Our symbols, many of which will be represented on a completed provincial coat of arms, are all an important part of the culture held in common by all Ontarians. They cut across what differentiates us as individuals and groups without cancelling out the characteristic cultural diversity of our society. That is why I say again that I support very strongly this resolution to augment the provincial coat of arms of Ontario, and I call on all members of the House to make their support unanimous.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I too am very honoured to be able to stand here and congratulate the member for Lanark-Renfrew for bringing forward this resolution. If I may be so bold as to offer the suggestion, this is just another example of the hard work and dedication that member brings to this chamber. As a newly elected member myself two years ago, I must say that the member for Lanark-Renfrew is very much a role model for the rest of us in terms of his dedication.

I was somewhat troubled by the member for Kenora's comments, because the very first thing we do, before we can even claim the title of parliamentarian, is to swear an oath to the crown. To suggest that therefore symbolism is not critically important to reflect that authority in the coat of arms of this province is quite unusual and quite untoward. To suggest that private members' hour is somehow not an appropriate forum to discuss issues like this is very unbecoming, and the member should know better. Private members' hour is precisely to be used for an issue such as this.

**Mr Miclash:** Talk to my constituents. Talk to Jacqueline Rush after her program was cancelled. Talk to Jacqueline Rush; ask her about the coat of arms. Listen to what Jacqueline Rush has to say about the coat of arms.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Kenora, you don't have the floor.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I know the member opposite was accorded the respect of people listening to his comments. I

would hope he would offer the same respect to the members on this side.

The bottom line, though, is that private members' hour is an important opportunity for members on both sides of the House to bring forward initiatives that aren't of the import of, say, some of the labour initiatives and education and health care. The backbenchers are not in a position to change that. What we are in a position to do is to reflect the values and the priorities of the people in our ridings, and the member for Lanark-Renfrew does that in spades when he brings forward this resolution.

The crown is the symbol of authority in our system of government, both in our parliamentary democracy and in the constitutional monarchy. The other augmentations proposed by the member will reflect the historical realities of this province and, as our colleague from Hamilton Centre just offered a few minutes ago, also incorporate a number of contemporary aspects of Ontario society as well.

The absence of a crown is a terrible oversight. Indeed, that Ontario has lagged behind other provinces is a fact that is to the credit of this member to have noticed and to have reflected in this resolution.

It's particularly fitting in this year, the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Giovanni Caboto, or John Cabot, as he's known in England, and the establishment of royal authority, the authority of the crown in Canada, that the member would be bringing forward this resolution and hopefully seeing it reflected in action by the Legislative Assembly.

The symbol of our crown is important. The coat of arms is important. I think this resolution goes a long way to incorporating in that coat of arms the very basis, the very underpinnings of all that we stand for in this chamber on both sides of the House. I would call on all members to put aside their political and partisan differences and reflect that reality by supporting the honourable member's resolution here today.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I thank the member for Scarborough East for sharing the time. It's a pleasure to stand in support of ballot item 89 and the member for Lanark-Renfrew, Mr Jordan. I have the greatest respect for him and his dedication to the very theme we're discussing today. I just wanted to bring together a few little elements of the importance of this private member's resolution.

My riding of Durham East has a long tradition of being united behind many traditions of the country and its formation, for many years. The symbols we possess today as a country, as a province and as communities, and indeed as families, are very important. They're stressed or recognized by our flags, our colours and, as mentioned by one of the previous speakers, our flowers and animals. For us the flower is of course the trillium, recognized in 1937 as the symbol.

This is all about bringing forward the traditions that embrace and embellish not only this Legislature but indeed Canada, democracy and the Commonwealth and the special relationship we have with the crown sovereign of our country, the reigning Queen. I think it's very fitting and appropriate that we bring together the symbols and traditions, and I think Mr Jordan has done a remarkable job of researching those traditions and symbols and recognizing them by augmenting and completing our wonderful and beautiful coat of arms.

I'm wearing on my lapel, as most members do, the flag of Ontario, a stylized version, but it also has the coat of arms. I'd be pleased to wear the crown as the completion of our symbols of the province of Ontario. I'd urge every member to support Mr Jordan's resolution today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? There are 12 seconds left. If not, I recognize Mr Jordan for two minutes.

**Mr Jordan:** It's indeed a pleasure to have this opportunity to respond to some of the members who have shown an interest, first of all by coming here this morning and by taking time to provide their thoughts on this resolution.

As to the member for Kingston and The Islands, I was moved, if you will, by his concern about cost. That should not be a concern, because nothing will be changed until the present crests and correspondence and so on that we're using have to be replaced. That would not be changed; it's not affected. What you're telling me is that perhaps you didn't read all the research we sent. Lots of times, members don't have time to read that.

But I want to thank them very much that they do support it and see the value in it. When we go out on Remembrance Day in November, we don't go out to promote a conflict; we go out to honour those who gave us what we have. That is the thought behind bringing the crown to the crest of Ontario. In so doing, as the premiers come together shortly, we will then be co-sovereign with the federal government; we are, but it will be brought to light that we have certain sovereign rights within the sovereign nation. As was pointed out, Quebec since 1939 has had the crown on theirs to recognize its special status relative to language, religion and common law. Going into the premiers' conference alone, I think it's valuable that we have brought this to the House.

I thank all my colleagues for their support.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

We will deal with ballot item number 89 standing in the name of Mr Jordan. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Mr Jordan has moved private member's resolution number 64. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1202 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GOVERNMENT MAILING

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** Mr Speaker, you will remember that yesterday we heard from various ministers about job programs they had created. They were congratulating themselves on the great number of programs they had created.

I had brought to my attention another piece of propaganda sent out by Mike Harris with a letter on June 19. It's Promises Made, Promises Kept: Two-year Major Milestones of the Harris Government. There is one constituent in my riding who was not impressed to receive this, Ms Jacqueline Rush, who was a former training consultant of the Ontario skills development office. She gets this beautiful handout about how the Harris government has created this number of jobs. She was laid off by the Harris government before receiving this package in the mail.

She took the June 19 letter and wrote to Mr Harris: "Thank you very much for all this information. You just overlooked the fact that you cut the funding to my program and laid me off at the beginning of May." She goes on to thank the Premier.

I would like to know what the Premier spent on sending out this propaganda to constituents across Ontario, how many he sent out, how many of these people found themselves in the same spot as Jacqueline Rush when they received it, not only to have been laid off but to have lost their program. I want the Premier to table those numbers and the amount this propaganda cost the Ontario taxpayers.

### SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** When this Legislature was discussing Bill 104, the Fewer School Boards Act, one of the concerns that was raised by both opposition parties was the issue of how the rules and their change would affect the willingness of citizens to dedicate the time and energy that's needed to have citizen control of school policy.

Indeed, we read this morning in the London Free Press — the heading is, "School Reforms Scaring Off Some Would-be Trustees." Out of 99 incumbent trustees in the reformed school boards in London, Middlesex, Elgin and Oxford counties, only two have declared themselves willing to run under the rules. Why? Let me quote one of the current incumbents, who said: "It's just not worth it. All these changes drove me up the wall, but it was the disrespect the government has shown for trustees, educators and the whole system that really got to me. To be so devalued by the education ministry is like a slap in the face. It's demeaning, degrading and upsetting."

It is very important for the citizens of this province to have as their representatives on school boards people who are dedicated to the issue of education, and this government, with the changes it has made, is undermining that democratic process.

### SWANSEA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** I rise today to offer congratulations to the Swansea Horticultural Society on their first-place finish in the cottage garden category at this year's Canadian National Exhibition garden contest.

In the four-year history of the Ontario Horticultural Association contest, the Swansea Horticultural Society has entered the past three years, placing second in 1995, third in 1996, and first place this year. Dave Money, the coordinator of the contest, stated that the judges felt the garden was more than deserving of its first-place finish.

The display was made up of black oak savannah native plants, which are on loan from the city of Toronto's High Park greenhouse, and trees from the city tree nursery. These plants and trees will be returned to the city to be planted after the close of the CNE in September.

The objective of the display is to educate people to the attractiveness of our native plants and grasses.

The Swansea Horticultural Society, located in the heart of my riding of High Park-Swansea, and just a few blocks away from historic High Park, will be celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Formed in 1937 by gardeners in the great village of Swansea, it has survived and continues its traditions of planting and maintaining native plants at the Swansea Town Hall Community Centre.

My congratulations to Bill Roberts, president of the Swansea Horticultural Society, for planning and designing the basic elements of the display, and to Eugene Gallagher, who designed the water elements. Congratulations also to the other members of the team, Susan Drac, Olga Waszek, Maria Boylan, Marjorie McMullin, Courtney Jackson and Alec Gallagher.

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** Yesterday the government brought in rule changes to this Legislature. This set of measures is the most galling in that it attempts to undermine not just the opposition members but members of the public, who have a legitimate right to know what's going on with legislation.

What I've realized is that this government is doing that with just about every measure it takes. Its modus operandi is to ensure that no one can keep up with its agenda; to pass as much legislation as it can, bad legislation that it's attempting to hide from the public in an effort to move forward with another part of their agenda, which would then see them get through the next election with accolades from people right across this province.

You're not going to get away with it. These rule changes are part of that political imperative to ensure that the government can act with haste when it deals with the bad part of its agenda, its political agenda. We're not going to allow you to get away with that and the public isn't

going to allow you to get with that, because it's anti-democratic. Quite honestly, people will catch up to you.

Isn't it ironic that your own backbenchers are saying you're going too fast, that this isn't going slow enough for people to be consulted. In fact, consultation is the cornerstone of our democracy.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Yesterday the Solicitor General released the fire marshal's report on the Plastimet fire in my home town, Hamilton. In fact, that fire was right in my riding and it affects the constituents I'm elected to represent here.

As far as the report goes, it's fine, but who knows if it goes far enough? We don't yet have all the facts and information on the table. But in that report, the fire marshal says early on, "Consequences may include immediate and long-term health outcomes for the general public and emergency responders." That's a serious statement, a serious indictment of this government's lack of response to those health concerns.

The Public Inquiries Act states as part of the requirement to hold a public inquiry that there be "a matter of public concern." I can't imagine a statement coming from an official as important as the fire marshal being more a matter of public concern than one that says there may be long-term health effects on the residents and the people who fought that fire.

You want to talk about public concern? Look at the headlines in the Hamilton Spectator that blaze across our porches every day: "116 Hospital Staff Ill After Fire." "Fire's Legacy Damning: 38% in Area Reported Being Sick." "Plastimet Fallout Threatens Water." There's no excuse at all for this government not to call a public inquiry, unless there's something they're afraid of.

## HENLEY REGATTA SITE

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** On Friday, August 8, I was honoured to take part in a ceremony at the Henley Regatta site in St Catharines. The event was held to dedicate seven shells, all doubles, to the Canadian rowing team.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank John and Norris Walker of Walker Industries for donating those shells. Their voluntarism and spirit of giving is so important to so many people and programs in the Niagara region.

All seven shells were dedicated to individual who worked tirelessly to ensure that the 1999 World Rowing Championships came to Ontario and the city of St Catharines. One, I discovered a day before the ceremony, was dedicated in my name, a very humbling experience, particularly knowing how the sport of rowing teaches our young people about team building, self-discipline and working together for the benefit of the team, a good example for all our communities, our province and our country.

Thanks also to the Premier and to the government for approving up to $1.5 million towards the cleanup of the Henley course, which, when combined with the contribution of other partners, all three levels of government and the community, was a prerequisite to winning the bid to hold the World Rowing Championships.

I, along with all Ontarians, look forward to welcoming the world to the city of St Catharines in 1999.

**1340**

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Time and time again I have raised the issue of the extreme injustice this government is committing against those in our province who live in island communities.

This government's decision to download to municipalities responsibility for operating and financing ferry services that link those islands to the mainland will have a devastating financial impact.

For example, taking on the responsibility will cost $5.8 million for the Howe and Wolfe islands ferries and $1.4 million for the Amherst Island ferry, a 400% to 800% tax increase. That decision alone leaves the islands facing eightfold property tax increases.

Now we have the estimated cost of police services, and just when the islanders thought things couldn't get worse, they did. Wolfe Island, for example, is told it's going to have to pay $154,000 for police services, which amounts to $197 per household. That seems a little steep considering that municipal officials estimate that on average, police visit the island about twice a month. That is about $6,000 per visit.

The islanders want to pay their fair share, but surely this is not fair. This is robbery. In the case of Howe Island, they're asked to pay $60,000 for police services. They have a total budget of $300,000. The police go there about once or twice a year, at a rate of about $20,000 a visit.

Mr Solicitor General, do the right thing.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Tonight at midnight the new rules take effect and the Harris government chalks up one more successful blow against democracy. These new rules mean the government can now ram through its destructive agenda at breakneck speed, passing bills before anybody has had a chance to really look at them. Our ability to debate legislation in this House has been seriously eroded. There will be far less debate and far less public scrutiny. That's not what democracy is about.

Where is the chorus of Ontarians crying out for faster legislation? I haven't heard it. Even that ever-diminishing group of Ontarians who generally support your agenda say you are going too fast, "Too much, too soon; slow it down and get it right." Even some of your backbenchers are telling you to slow down.

It's a slap in the face of some of your own caucus, to the opposition, to the media who monitor the goings-on

here, but mostly it's a slap in the face of the people of Ontario who elected your government. Once again Mike Harris is not listening to what the people are telling him.

In conclusion, I want to read from a letter from a constituent, Mr Patrick Galvin, who lives in my riding. He says:

"We must always bear in mind that the privileges and rights of Parliament are ultimately the rights of the people. Let us never forget to be vigilant in defending these rights, because if we do not in the future, we may not have these rights and privileges to use."

## FASTBALL TOURNAMENT

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** This afternoon I have the pleasure of informing the members about an event to be held this weekend for the first time in Cobourg, Ontario. This event is a very special one as it is the third national Masters Fastball Tournament, to be held in this beautiful town.

Opening ceremonies to kick off the event will be held this evening, which include 14 masters teams from across Canada. The masters division is comprised of players who are age 37 and older, with pitchers required to be a minimum of 40. When I become of age, I hope to join.

The tournament is to be held in Cobourg at the Legion Fields Sports Complex, which has been hailed by many to be the best softball facility in Canada.

I extend my congratulations to the town of Cobourg, particularly Mr Bob Spooner, deputy reeve, and Mr Harry Jescke, manager of the Legion Fields Sports Complex, for working with the Canadian Amateur Softball Association to organize this exciting national event on such short notice. With only five months of preparation, where the average notice has been one to two years, there's been an extraordinary effort put forth by all those involved, including facilities staff, baseball players' spouses and many volunteers. With such commitment and top-notch competitors, this weekend is sure to be an unqualified success.

Attending this premier national tournament is definitely an excellent reason to plan for a visit to Cobourg this weekend, and we certainly extend very best wishes for great weather for the upcoming weekend.

# STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** We are committed in this government to improving the lives of children in this province, so I'm pleased today to inform the House that there are going to be two independent reviews of the child protection system in Ontario. These reviews are the next in a series of steps that we are taking to reform the child protection system.

An independent review will be undertaken of a random sampling of child abuse and neglect cases in all 55 children's aid societies in the province. In addition, an external review will be conducted by an independent consultant on how the ministry is meeting its responsibilities under the Child and Family Services Act.

We know there are problems with the child protection system; we know from the coroners' inquests, the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force, the front-line workers, the children's aid societies. These two reviews, these two additional steps, are going to give us the specific data we need to help correct those problems.

While a process exists to monitor how each children's aid society meets with ministry standards, this review is a significant departure from the past. It marks the first time that the review will be conducted by independent experts as well as staff, and also the review will include child neglect cases as well as child abuse cases.

The review of the children's aid societies will examine the case files for compliance with ministry standards and make recommendations for improvement. If necessary, each society will be required by the ministry to take corrective action. These findings will be used to develop steps that can be taken province-wide to improve the child protection system in Ontario.

The external review that's being conducted by an independent consultant on the ministry is going to look at how we can improve how the ministry manages and monitors the child protection system. This review is going to result in recommendations to improve the ministry's policies and our organizational responsibilities. Both reviews will be completed by the end of the year.

We have welcomed the comprehensive and constructive recommendations made by the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force and the inquests that have been held over the last several months. We are taking a step-by-step approach to improve the child protection system by implementing those recommendations pertaining to the ministry.

The steps already taken include $45 million allocated for more intervention and prevention programs; an additional $15 million from the government's spring budget to help protect vulnerable children; a mandatory risk assessment system for use by the children's aid societies across the province; a computer database to link all children's aid societies across Ontario; and additional resources for training.

We are also going to establish a panel of experts to examine the child protection issues in the legislation, the Child and Family Services Act. We will also work with professional organizations to raise their awareness about the requirement for them to report child abuse and neglect.

I want to make sure that the ministry is doing what it can to protect children in this province. These initiatives and the others we will take will help reform the system to do this. I invite my colleagues from across the floor, along with the others who have been involved in child protection, to continue working together with us to improve the lives of children in this province.

In closing, I'd like to add that I had the opportunity to meet with the board members of the children's aid association yesterday, and I must say I was pleased with their commitment and cooperation. That relationship between them and their agencies and the ministry is helping the system improve, and I look forward to continuing that relationship in the future as we take additional steps.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** Today the government will be tabling amendments to Bill 99, the Workers' Compensation Reform Act.

The standing committee on resources development recently concluded 10 days of public hearings in Toronto, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Windsor, London, Cambridge, Burlington and Kingston. During that time, more than 140 groups and individuals appeared before the committee and about 150 submissions were received.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues who participated in the deliberations and I also want to thank the many groups and individuals who took the time to provide their input. The government listened to the very useful advice provided by injured workers and their spouses, employees, employers and medical experts during these hearings across Ontario.

**1350**

In response we are proposing changes that reflect the most current knowledge and practices in injury prevention and workplace compensation.

First, our proposed changes will ensure that research is immediately targeted towards the pressing issue of chronic pain while compensation for injured workers suffering from chronic pain will continue.

Second, we are introducing amendments that will introduce a limited policy audit function for the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal. Under certain circumstances this will permit WCAT to refer policy issues back to the Workers' Compensation Board for review within 60 days. WCAT will continue to be bound by WCB policy.

Third, we are introducing changes to clarify return to work and labour market re-entry provisions of Bill 99 in order to ensure that injured workers are returned to work in a safe and timely manner.

In a moment, my colleague the minister responsible for seniors issues, and formerly the minister responsible for workers' compensation, will provide details with regard to an additional amendment which will significantly impact the benefits of seniors.

Bill 99 represents the final step in the complete overhaul of the workers' compensation system. When it is fully implemented, it will strengthen the board's pivotal role in preventing injury and illnesses in our workplaces.

This legislation will fulfil one of this government's key commitments and contribute to a climate of economic growth and job creation. It will also lead to a significant reduction in the human, social and economic costs of workplace injury and illness. It will result in a fully funded system that is sensitive to the needs of injured workers and sustainable by the employers who fund the system and create the jobs.

We are looking forward to presenting this bill to the Legislature this fall for third reading and implementing the new act effective January 1, 1998.

## SURVIVORS' BENEFITS

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Workers' Compensation Board]):** It gives me great pleasure to join my colleague the Minister of Labour in proposing an initiative worth over $135 million to some of the most vulnerable members of Ontario society.

Members will be aware that lifetime workers' compensation pensions are paid to the widows and widowers of persons killed in workplace accidents in our province. However, widows and widowers remarried prior to 1985 had their pensions cut off upon remarriage. They received a lump sum payout equivalent to two years' benefits and nothing else.

The act was amended in 1985 to protect the benefits of widows and widowers who remarried after the April 1, 1985, date. However, the 1985 amendments failed to remove the unfair penalty imposed on widows and widowers who had already remarried. This government is committed to a workers' compensation that operates on principles of fairness and protection of the most vulnerable. The arbitrary 1985 cutoff rule meets neither test.

This afternoon the government will be tabling a further amendment to Bill 99, one that would restore the benefits lost by widows and widowers who remarried prior to 1985.

This amendment, if approved by the committee and ultimately by this Legislature, will allow widows and widowers to have their lost benefits reinstated retroactively to 1985. The Workers' Compensation Board estimates that this amendment would provide widows and widowers: $95 million in lost benefits; in addition, $40 million in future benefits.

Allow me to recognize the special contributions of injured workers support groups, and in particular Ms Muriel Poster of Thunder Bay. Ms Poster raised the issue of survivor benefits during my consultations last year and again during the Bill 99 committee hearing process.

Others who have continued to press the issue of survivor benefits include Morag Connelly of the Oakville section of the Injured Workers Support Group and groups like Senior Link who represent and work with seniors in need, who are in the House with us this afternoon.

In speaking with Lillian Morgenthau of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons this afternoon, she said: "Widows and widowers are the most vulnerable group in our society. We applaud the government for listening and correcting this injustice."

Members will also want to recognize the personal support and leadership in this initiative that has been shown by the chair of the WCB, Glen Wright, and my colleague the Minister of Labour and her parliamentary assistant, Bart Maves. I urge all members to support this important

amendment to Bill 99 and to join in redressing unfair treatment of widows and widowers that has continued for far too long in the province of Ontario.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to respond to the statement made by the Minister of Community and Social Services. The minister today made a great show and tells us that in her heart of hearts, she is deeply concerned about Ontario's children.

I have more than a few questions to put to her today on behalf of Ontario's children. As the minister ultimately responsible for the welfare of children in this province, here are some of the questions: Where were you when your government decided to cut welfare rates by 22%? Where were you when 500,000 Ontario children were affected in a very direct way by those cuts? Where were you when they decided to get rid of junior kindergarten in the province so that now this September we will have 60,000 Ontario children deprived of junior kindergarten? JK, as the minister well knows, is, among many other things, an opportunity for kids to be brought into the system, for teachers to get a look at them, to assess them, to find out if there are any problems and to begin to address those problems.

Minister, when you were at the cabinet table and the Premier said, "We need $5.5 billion to pay for our tax cut," why didn't you say, "You can get it from other ministries, but you're not going to get it from Ontario's kids and you're not going to get it from Ontario's children's aid societies"?

Children's aid societies have responded in the only way they could. They let go 340 case workers. You are now purporting to do a review to tell you what the problems are. We already know, by and large, what those problems are. We had the report of the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force, the final report that came out in July of this year, and it stated in part: "The review of workloads throughout children's aid societies indicates that the system is operating beyond its capacity. Sufficient time and support must be made available for effective interventions to be designed and delivered."

They are saying that they are understaffed, that they are overworked and that they are underfunded. What you have done is you have contributed to that problem in a very real way by cutting $17 million from Ontario's children's aid societies. What I'm asking you on behalf of Ontario's kids is, when are you going to start to do your job? When are you going to stand up for them? When are you going to tell other people at the cabinet table that in the grand scheme of things, if we can't get it right with the kids, we're screwing up our future and that it's your responsibility and if they won't allow you to bring forward those kinds of initiatives on behalf of Ontario's kids, that you're not going to stand for it, that you're going to go public because you feel you have a solemn responsibility and obligation to Ontario children?

Minister, you will know that I have put together a task force, together with my caucus, and we are travelling the province and we are picking up the last few titbits of information that are necessary before we move forward on this issue. I will be bringing those to this Legislature. They will be solid and substantive, and I will be expecting you to act on behalf of Ontario's children.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I would like to address the comments to the Minister of Labour and the minister responsible for seniors. First of all, it is interesting to follow the parade of announcements to show a kinder, gentler face. The indications, by what you have said today, indicate somewhat of an improvement. I hope these aren't the only three amendments that the government plans to put forward. We expect there will be hundreds because the bill is a large one, 102 pages, plus many things to deal with.

If, as the minister says, you have truly, truly listened, you would have heard the message loud and clear that the issue of chronic pain that you talk about — you're just saying you are going to do research on it — conclusively, beyond the normal healing time, is a major, major problem and leads to unfairness.

## SURVIVORS' BENEFITS

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** On the issue of dealing with seniors or people who have lost their spouses, you say you're restoring the benefits fully, which to me would mean it would go back to 90% of the benefits, which was in the original bill; and that you would also deal with the deindexing formula, which as you know in Bill 99 is cut again from what it is in the present existing bill, so that would return to three quarters of what the factor is. If you're serious about this, I hope you will have listened to Muriel Poster and her concerns that the restoration be just and fair. It is not just for her but also for many others around the province. I know you know that there would perhaps be a pending legal action, as there was in British Columbia recently in which the widows of deceased workers won their case. I look forward to the amendments and to look at the specifics, and I hope you come forward with many more.

**1400**

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** In response to the Minister of Community and Social Services, whenever you make a statement that takes a step forward for children, you know I will be there supporting you. But I've got to tell you, today I'm reminded of someone who is running frantically to and fro trying to plug the leaks when it was your own gang of friends who set off the explosives that created the cracks in the first place.

I don't think your government gets it. I don't think you understand some of the measures you've put in place and the consequences for children in this province. That has left you and your ministry, with the children's aid society, desperately trying to meet a growing demand, which is impossible when you've had resources taken away from you. Let me just remind you that your first step in terms of cutting social assistance touched the lives of half a million children in this province and their families and created much greater stress on those families.

Take a look at the way in which, unfortunately, your government moved ahead at breakneck speed and bungled your reforms to the family support plan and how that left families without payments and in crisis, under more stress. Take a look at what's happening here in Metro, the fastest-growing population. In our shelters right now are children under the age of five, homeless. Think of this. At a time when we're hearing stories about refugees coming from Czechoslovakia and there's not enough room in the shelters, it's because we have 1,800 homeless families in those shelters right now. The result of that and many of the other things your ministry has done has put such stress on families. It has created a greater population at risk.

I spoke with an executive director of the children's aid society recently who told me that they used to identify reasons for the families they were dealing with in categories, like that there might have been alcohol abuse or substance abuse, or there may have been physical abuse in the family or a history of it. The greatest reason now is inability to cope, families with the inability to cope. That's directly as a result of some of the actions of your government.

Minister, these are tools, and tools are good and important, but if you don't have the workers to pick up the tools and use them, the work can't get done. You have created an increase in demand for children's aid services in this province as a result of your action. In the last year it has gone up by 10%. We have lost 340 workers from the system. You have cut the front-line money. It's breaking. It's bursting at the seams. The system can't cope. You have got step in and change that, because more kids are at risk and government has less ability to deal with it.

This is a crisis. You can't keep putting Band-Aids on it. You say you want to work with us. I have offered select committees. I have offered all sorts of ways of working with you. You haven't taken me up on it. Get serious. Let's put children first in reality, not just in rhetoric.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I want to respond to the comments of the Minister of Labour and minister without portfolio. I first of all acknowledge how ironic that it's the Bonnie and Clyde of WCB destruction who stood in their places today to talk about fairness; in their comments they speak of fairness. Hell, this government took the word "fair" out of WCB, the same as you did with the Ontario Labour Relations Act. You don't know anything about fairness; you just know about taking care of your pals.

This statement today goes on to talk about how you care about the most vulnerable. Bull. What happened was that you had so many people at those public hearings that you had to respond to at least a couple of issues. This is a victory for those injured workers who came out in the dead of summer to fight you and publicly proclaim their opposition to what you're doing. It's got nothing to do with what you think about the most vulnerable.

Let's take a look at what you're not doing. You're not changing the fact that 5% of the net income of injured workers is taken away. You're not doing anything about the fact that $6 billion of that money is going to your corporate pals as a refund, as a gift. You're still taking away 50% of the contribution of money into the injured workers' pension plan, and you say you care about the most vulnerable.

You're still eliminating the Occupational Disease Panel. You say in here that what you're doing will contribute to a reduction in the human, social and economic costs of workplace. Bull. What it's going to do is reduce the number of reported injuries, because fewer people will qualify, fewer people will be allowed to meet the time limits, more people will be intimidated in terms of putting in claims. That's what this is all about. You're going to make the stats look good while the injured workers sit out there on the social scrap heap and suffer. Then you stand in here and have the audacity to say that you care.

# ORAL QUESTIONS

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, you announced with great fanfare today that you are about to do something which you believe to be in the interests of Ontario's children. I want to come back to this issue of $17 million which I have raised countless times in this Legislature. You can't get off the hook on this one.

The $17 million resulted in the loss of 340 case workers in our children's aid societies. The Ontario Child Mortality Task Force says we have a number of problems, and one of those certainly is the fact that we are understaffed when it comes to having enough people on the front line who can go into homes, make assessments and do whatever is necessary to protect children. There was all kinds of evidence at coroners' inquests themselves which related how some of the problems connected there were related to the fact that CAS is understaffed.

Do you not feel that the appropriate measure to take immediately is to restore that funding of $17 million?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I appreciate the question from the honourable member. If all we were doing to respond to the 122

recommendations that have come forward from those very thorough task forces was the two things we announced today, I could understand his concerns and his frustration. But that is not all we are doing. There are a whole series of things that we are doing because there are a whole series of recommendations that have been made, not only to us but to the children's aid societies. We know we have to make these changes, and I make no apologies for taking a step-by-step approach. We want to make sure that what is happening will actually assist and we want to make sure that the workers are there, they've got the tools they need.

As for the money that he keeps harping on, throwing money at the system has been the way everyone has always solved the problem. If it's money he wants to talk about, and he keeps talking about $17 million, well, I would like to throw back to him the $60 million that we have invested and put forward for intervention and prevention and to assist in responding to those recommendations.

**Mr McGuinty:** The minister just doesn't get it. There is no substitute for having people, caring workers, on the front lines in Ontario who can go in, find out where the problems are and take the corrective action, whatever that might be. There is simply no substitute for that.

We have countless kinds of evidence before us now that we are underfunded. Our care workers are working too long and they're not being able to get all the work done. You've got to address that fact in the most immediate way, and the only way to do that is to restore that funding. How you could have allowed the Premier to take $17 million away from our children's aid societies is beyond me. But you can stand up right now and you can correct that and say, "I commit immediately to restoring that $17 million." Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** There are many people on the front lines in this child welfare system. What they don't need is another great, grand task force like our honourable member has. He says, "We have the recommendations." He says, "We know what needs to be done." If that is the case, then why is he out conducting this great, grand task force that he has going?

**1410**

We have recommendations; we know what needs to be done. Today we announced two more steps in responding to that because we recognize that system has to be fixed to better protect those children.

The other thing we think is very important — and again if he has listened to what has happened with the recommendation and what the experts are saying — is that one of the ways we have to relieve the pressure on those children's aid societies and those workers who are doing those jobs is to do more for intervention and prevention so families don't end up at children's aid, so kids don't end up falling through the cracks.

**Mr McGuinty:** Fifty-six Ontario children were murdered in the last two years. The majority of those kids were under the age of three. The inquests have pointed to the fact time and time again that we aren't doing enough in this province to care for our kids, and they point time and time again to the fact that there are simply not enough people on the front lines to make the necessary inquiries and to take the necessary steps to ensure that we're protecting our kids.

You can dance around this as long as you want, but at the end of the day, after you have four months of review and where we now know that about 20 kids a day are the subject of abuse in Ontario — at least 20 kids a day — you can count the numbers for yourself and tell me how many children will have been abused or will have been the subject of neglect while you fiddle.

Minister, once again, $17 million: Will you return that to its rightful owners, the CAS in this province so they can do the work on behalf of Ontario kids?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We are putting $60 million into helping improve our child welfare and our intervention and prevention programs out there. Yes, resources are part of the response. That's why we have put that money forward, but so is training, so are better data, so is a better risk-assessment tool. Those also are the recommendations that have been put forward to this government; so also is improving the standards, improving the ministry's response to how children's aid societies work. We have been quite prepared to take those steps. I continue to be prepared to take those steps, and I congratulate the children's aid societies for the work they are doing, not only out there on the front lines but with this ministry and with this government, to fix the system. That's what we should be doing, fixing the system. That's what we are doing.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. You will know that some time ago now we had a very serious fire in the Hamilton area. Thousands of people were living in the immediate vicinity. The fire took place some few short blocks away from homes. You will know that we have been pressing for an inquiry in this matter and we believe it's important to get to the bottom of this issue, to find out a number of things related to the cause of the fire, the role your ministry played or did not play and the outcome to the people who have been affected by the fire.

I want to begin by asking you a very simple question: Why did it take 11 hours, 11 full hours, for that piece of equipment, which I understand is the only one we have in the province which properly analyses the air and helps us assess whether or not neighbours in the immediate vicinity ought to be evacuated, to get from wherever it was in this province — and this falls under the responsibility of your ministry, clearly — to the site to make an assessment as to whether or not the people living in the immediate vicinity ought to be evacuated?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I think the Leader of the Opposition should know that the response to a fire is done in terms of the stages of the seriousness and the recognition of the seriousness of that fire. My officials were on the site about an

hour after the fire started. At that point in time they started to advise the fire chief and the medical officer of health of the contents of the plant and give them advice as to what the firefighters could expect in terms of the smoke and inhalation problems they might have.

About two hours past that, the emergency 2 vehicle was put in place and was onsite and started to take samples of the air. They produced those samples by about 11:30. At about 11:50, 10 minutes before midnight my officials decided to call the TAGA truck, which was in Toronto at that time. They had to get together the staff, they had to calibrate it. They were onsite at 5:30, five and a half hours after they were called.

**Mr McGuinty:** The bottom line here is that it took 11 hours for a piece of equipment that your officials believed was essential to make an assessment of the environmental risk and the risk to the health of the people living nearby to get to the site.

I do not believe that is acceptable, and that is one of the reasons why we are calling for a public inquiry. I think we owe it to the firefighters who were called upon, at risk, to fight this fire, who are demanding a public inquiry, that we have such an inquiry. I think we owe it to the people of the city of Hamilton, whose municipal council has by way of a resolution asked for an inquiry. I think we ought to have that inquiry. There are a number of community groups the minister would be well aware of who are also asking for an inquiry.

We have to find out the answer to a number of questions, including, why did it take so long to get that piece of equipment to the site? How many other sites would there be potentially in this province now which would place other communities at risk? Minister, once again, will you have the inquiry?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As I indicated, the emergency response does not require that this particular piece of equipment be in place at any fire across Ontario. There are two such TAGA trucks, which cost over $1 million apiece, that are manned by very skilled technicians and are located at different places in the province and have different functions when they're not called in an emergency situation.

There was a decision at 10 to 12 to call this truck into place. At that time of the night, of course, many of the people who would operate this truck, very skilled people, were all over the place and it was necessary to collect them. They started to collect them about 1 o'clock in the morning and they were there at 5:30. I don't think that's unreasonable. I don't think that leads to a call for an inquiry.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Final supplementary.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Minister, you must be the only person in this province who believes that your ministry's response to the fire was adequate. Maybe you should ask the over 100 firefighters who suffered health effects as a result of the fire if they believe it was adequate. Maybe you should ask the 116 staff at Hamilton Civic Hospital who suffered health effects. Maybe you should ask the 38% of the residents who reported health effects from the fire if your response was adequate. Frankly, it was inadequate.

You don't have all the answers, we don't expect you to have all the answers, but that is why we are asking for a public inquiry. You owe it. You yourself said: "I have nothing to fear from a public inquiry. I have nothing to fear from how my ministry responded." Those were your words, Minister.

Very clearly you have a responsibility to live up to that commitment. That report yesterday was damning because it talked about the long-term and short-term health effects to the residents of Hamilton, to the firefighters and emergency. You owe it to those folks. Will you stand in your place today and recommend to the Solicitor General that he immediately call a public inquiry into the Ministry of Environment's response to the fire?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I've said in the past that I'm not frightened of an inquiry. I believe that my officials acted promptly. Some of them worked for 26, 28 hours straight. The Ministry of Environment labs worked night and day to get the results back speedily.

The report is to the Solicitor General. It would be within the Solicitor General's ambit to make that kind of decision, so I now refer this question to him.

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Mr Christopherson:** I want to continue with the issue of the Plastimet fire in the north end of my riding in downtown Hamilton.

Minister, you will know that the report that came from the fire marshal's office yesterday says, "Consequences may include immediate and long-term health outcomes for the general public and emergency responders."

You've already heard from my Hamilton colleague that there are 116 hospital staff, there are over 250 firefighters. We know there are concerns about toxins being leached into the water. These are environmental issues which stand the serious possibility, according to the fire marshal, of having adverse health effects on the citizens in my community

Minister, I want you to stand in your place, if you're so cocksure there's nothing to worry about, and give an iron-clad guarantee to every one of the residents in my community that there's absolutely no chance of any long-term health effects as a result of that environmental disaster.

**1420**

**Hon Mr Sterling:** The function of the Ministry of Environment is to provide information — scientific, technical information — to your medical officer of health. The medical officer of health makes the decision whether there are short-term or long-term medical effects with regard to the surrounding population, which is her primary concern, and she made her decision on whether to evacuate or not to evacuate on the basis of that information.

You might speak to the medical officer of health with regard to her interpretation of the data. Her interpretation of the data which we provided was that there were not long-term health effects to the people of Hamilton as a result of this fire. That was —

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, you're not listening and you're also abdicating your responsibility. The people in my community, all the people I've mentioned, are looking to you and your colleagues in cabinet to do the right thing, and it's frustrating as hell from the viewpoint of Hamilton to see you stand here and stonewall day after day and abdicate your responsibilities.

The Public Inquiries Act threshold states "declared to be a matter of public concern." Last week there was a report that a survey done showed 85% of the respondents, who were not associated with any environmental group, were sceptical about environmental results coming out of your ministry officials. Further to that, 500 people who came out to a public meeting came away more angry than when they came in, because they didn't get the answers they want.

Minister, I call on you to do the right thing. I join with my colleague; this is not a partisan issue. Will you recommend to cabinet that there be a public inquiry? Because if you don't do it today you're ultimately going to do it.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We were concerned, of course, with the health effects on the people of Ontario. As the member knows, I visited the site the day after the fire started and talked to my people on the site, and to the fire chief and the medical officer of health. We were concerned always with the information flow and that's why we provided information at the meeting the member refers to. We have also set up a public information trailer, along with the medical officer of health, right in the area, so that citizens can in fact get real information, not from politicians but from scientists and technologists who know what they're talking about.

The environmental results which my ministry was producing — they took over some 3,000 tests in order to assure the citizens that they could make certain these were correct and true.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** My ministry took the unprecedented step, through Lillian Ross, to give the community $40,000 —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Minister, frankly, I'm stunned that you continue to take this fire so lightly. Do you remember the Hagersville fire, the tire fire that happened when the Liberals were in power? Well, that fire was small potatoes compared to this fire.

PVC is a dangerous toxic substance. It is unlike any other plastic because when it burns it gives off dioxins and furans which are dangerous to human health. There is no question about that, there is no doubt about it. The serious possibility of long-term health effects is a proven fact. The fire wasn't even treated as a dangerous chemical fire at the beginning.

There are some very serious problems here. We want to make sure it doesn't happen again and you're not taking this seriously. We need an inquiry to get to the bottom of what happened, to look at the long-term health effects on the people of Hamilton. Minister, will you commit to that today?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I know that environmental issues and the outflows from disasters like this are very, very serious, and the community of course has many, many questions. I believe that as a responsible Minister of Environment I should believe my scientists, I should believe my technicians, particularly when they have gone to the ends of the earth to provide these results in a timely manner, who have done excellent work. They are, in my view, beyond criticism in terms of what they have done in terms of the work they have provided. They have provided that evidence to the medical officer of health, who makes the decision as to what or what is not a long-term health effect.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I've cautioned the member for Hamilton East on a number of occasions. You have to come to order; I won't caution you again. Minister.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I consider this a serious matter. We have in fact done everything. Nobody has brought any hard evidence to me that there is a problem with the scientific data, that there is a problem with the response times, that there is a problem with anything with regard to that. The medical officer of health has made a statement that there is not a long-term health problem with this. I must accept her professional advice.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Starting this Sunday the Association of Municipalities of Ontario will be meeting here in Toronto. Municipal councillors from across Ontario, including members of the government party, are getting more and more frustrated with the government's attempt to download more than $1.2 billion in new costs on to their property taxpayers. What really sticks in their craw is the assertion by this minister that the deal is so good the municipalities should be able to cut their taxes.

Minister, you will be speaking to the conference of the municipalities. Will you use the opportunity to admit you were wrong and that your plan will mean tax hikes and service cuts to municipal ratepayers across the province?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the member of the third party, yes, I will be speaking to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario on Monday, and I will assure them that the trade of service delivery between the municipalities and the province of Ontario should not result in a tax increase to municipalities across the province.

There are obviously some municipalities that are going to fare better than others in this tradeoff, and we recognize that. That's why we've set up a municipal restructuring fund of $570 million to assist those municipalities through a transition period, probably between now and the year 2000, to balance their budgets. We recognize that. We recognized that right from the start and we've said that

repeatedly, that we know that some municipalities in the province are going to require assistance and we're going to be there to provide that assistance. That's what I'll be telling the Association of Municipalities of Ontario on Monday.

**Mr Wildman:** That so-called contingency fund has been spent by every minister in this government when they've talked to municipal leaders across the province.

The government argues that the download is revenue-neutral, but when the minister speaks about this he has left out the biggest download of them all: the elimination of the $660-million municipal support grant. Minister, will you admit that the elimination of this $660-million unconditional grant will mean that municipal taxpayers will face either significant tax hikes, despite your contingency fund, or service cuts?

**1430**

**Hon Mr Leach:** I have much more faith in the municipalities than that. We told the municipalities in 1995 that the days of high spending and tax increases were over, that this government was going to get its financial house in order and that we needed their assistance to do it. The municipal block grant used to be about $1.5 million. We told them in 1995 that would be reduced to $900 million. We told them in 1996 it was reduced to $667 million. I told them very clearly at the convention last year that grant would be eliminated this year. They're all aware of that. All of them — very responsible municipal politicians — should have, if they have not, taken that into consideration when they were preparing their 1998 budget.

We were very up front with the municipalities. We told them exactly what we were going to do. All the municipalities at the AMO conventions over the last two years told us they recognized we had to get the financial shape of the —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Final supplementary.

**Mr Wildman:** This minister has finally admitted that the download is not revenue-neutral. He says he told them about it, but he doesn't count it in his figures when he calculates that it's revenue-neutral.

In my area, Algoma district, your download, not counting the download of provincial highways to municipalities, works out to an estimated increase of $1,000 per household across Algoma district. All across the north it's the same, despite the fact your colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines has told representatives of the small municipalities he doesn't have time to meet with them at the AMO conference. It's across the whole north. Everywhere people are going to pay more, between $700 and $1,200 per household, because of your government's download. Tell these people it's revenue-neutral. Tell them they won't have to raise taxes.

Will you back up your promise that it's revenue-neutral with cash? Will you commit to $1.2 billion in annual grants —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Algoma, come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I wish the member opposite would listen, because I said right at the very beginning that we recognize there are some municipalities that are going to have a shortfall in the short term. That is why we have set up $570 million in a municipal restructuring fund to assist those municipalities — there may be some municipalities in the member's riding, and there quite probably are — and we would be there to provide that assistance to them.

I have a whole lot more faith in the municipalities to deal with this. We told them in 1995 that we were cutting a substantial amount of the municipal block grant. The municipalities responded with no tax increase. They responded in 1996 with no tax increase. The candidate running for mayor of Toronto has indicated he has examined the effect on the new city of Toronto and is confident there will be no tax increase. The member from Ottawa who is running for regional chair says he's examined the effects of the separation of services and is confident there will be no tax increase. Most municipalities can deal with that —

**The Speaker:** New question, official opposition.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, the minister who's responsible for promoting tourism in this province and who is well connected to the corporate captains of Ontario.

As thousands of tourists visit Ontario this week, they will be confronted with the same circumstances facing all motorists in our province: gas price gouging by the major oil companies. When I have asked you to intervene on behalf of consumers in this province in the past, you have jumped to the defence of the oil giants who are today demanding as high as 65.9 cents a litre in parts of southern Ontario, and more in the north. Are you going to continue to apologize for the big oil bosses who are ripping off both tourists and Ontario residents or are you finally going to call them on the carpet and demand they cease gouging motorists in this province?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** The guys in the limos don't have to pay extra gas money.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Parkdale, order. Government members, come to order, please.

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'd like to thank the member for his question. I thought the graphics were very nice, although I think they broke the rules.

As a government, we share the same concerns you have about high gasoline prices. It's not a new problem; in fact it's a recurring problem. I might say, as I've said before, I think you should take this matter up with your Ottawa counterparts.

I know my colleague Mr Norm Sterling, the Minister of Environment and Energy, is monitoring these prices, and his ministry is working with the federal government to protect consumers from any sort of collusion.

In terms of Ontario's competitiveness, I should say that our gasoline prices remain significantly lower than those in the countries of Ontario's overseas tourist markets.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** You can read the answer in Hansard if you don't want to listen. I would like to emphasize again that our prices are competitive with our major tourist countries around the world.

**Mr Bradley:** I was hoping that the minister, who has considerable business experience and connections with the business community, would be able to call these corporate giants on the carpet and tell them you disapprove.

But there's a longer-term problem. Independent gasoline retailers in this province bring at least some semblance of competition to the market, but, as is the case with consumers, are victims of the pricing policies of major oil companies. Other provincial jurisdictions in the country and state jurisdictions in the United States have taken action to prevent predatory pricing practices by the oil giants, practices which drive independent retailers out of business and eliminate any competition for the powerful oil companies.

Are you now prepared to introduce legislation to define predatory pricing as an offence under Ontario law; that is, a bill to prevent the major oil companies from undercutting, from selling at one price to independent operators and then charging less than that price in their own stations and thereby putting the independents out of business? That's within your jurisdiction. That's within your realm. Are you prepared to announce in the House today that you're prepared to introduce such legislation?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** In response to the supplementary question, I think from the tone of the question I should refer it to my colleague Mr Tsubouchi.

**1440**

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** First of all, I want to add to what my colleague has said, that ensuring fair competition is the responsibility of the federal government. Mr Bradley may laugh at this, but certainly when you look at the past Hansard reports, it's quite similar to —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

There were past indications when Mr Kwinter was in this seat and when Mr Laughren was the Treasurer that they attempted to come to grips with this answer. By and large, this is a federal matter. My colleague and predecessor in this portfolio wrote to Mr Manley, in his capacity as Minister of Industry, indicating his concern. What have we done? I have had the opportunity to meet with the independent gas brokers and sat down and tried to have a discussion on this issue. This particular matter will likely be coming up in the interprovincial ministers' conference next month. It certainly was put on the table by some of the Atlantic provinces. Therefore, we'll be having a discussion on this at the conference coming up to find some sort of harmonized idea to deal with the federal government on this. Once again, this is a federal issue.

## CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I would like to return to the announcement you made today, actually to some of the answers you've given to previous questions.

I could spend time debating with you the reality of some of the things you have said about where you have shifted your spending, but I want to put that aside. Let me just respond to your words. You said that you really believe in prevention, putting money in up front and trying to prevent the problem, that that's a really important and significant investment for you. I would dispute how that's being done, but I agree with those words. I think that's important. But I have to say to you that right now at the other end, at the end where we're intervening and working with children, there is plenty of evidence, and the task force report states it as well, that the growth in caseload, 10% in the last year alone, and the fewer workers, means that the system is operating beyond its capacity right now.

I'm not asking you to throw money at things, but I am asking you to acknowledge a problem. Would you agree that caseload is a problem right now for CAS workers?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I understand that the task force has certainly talked about caseloads. One of the things we are looking at in the funding and in the reviews of how the ministry is responding and how the children's aid societies are responding across the province is how to improve the ability of those front-line workers to handle the caseload. Are there things we can do through the database, are there things we can do through the training that will help them? There are many steps we will be taking as we get that feedback from the experts as they give us the recommendations.

**Ms Lankin:** I want to quote a couple of things to you. First of all, from the task force report: "The review of workloads throughout children's aid societies indicates that the system is operating beyond its capacity."

If you had been listening at another point in time over a year ago, almost two years ago, the Association of Children's Aid Societies told the standing committee on social development here, when we were looking at children's issues, that almost half the children's aid societies would be under severe stress once the full impact was felt of the government cutbacks implemented in 1996. They had serious concerns about the societies' ability to function effectively and legally.

I hope all the new tools, the computer system, the risk assessment system — I hope all those things mean that in the future caseloads can be managed better. Right now, there is 10% more demand this year than last year, there

are 340 fewer workers, and more kids at risk. In all the steps you're taking I'll support you, but only if you address the most fundamental of needs: We need enough case workers to make sure that kids are not at risk.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I appreciate the comments of the honourable member. Certainly we are looking at the entire system. Certainly caseload and staff members — how many are there, what they're doing, how they do it and how they are supported — has to be part of this review. We recognize that those front-line workers out there, who are giving of themselves in ways that I think very few of us fully appreciate until you have the opportunity to meet and talk with them, need more support. That's why we're taking the steps we're taking.

Do we need to do more than what has been announced to date? Absolutely. I agree, and that's why we will.

## NATURAL GAS SUPPLIERS

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. In my riding of York-Mackenzie and across the province, MPPs are hearing complaints about the questionable business practices of some natural gas brokers. These complaints are coming from consumers —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** That must be federal.

**Mr Klees:** Well, they're coming from consumers as well as a number of companies that are legitimately carrying on business as natural gas brokers.

While the option to choose where to purchase your natural gas is a legitimate option for consumers in Ontario, it seems that a number of salespeople are appearing at the door and representing themselves as representatives of their local utility, Consumers' Gas or Union Gas. Minister, I think it's important that consumers know what the minister is doing to ensure that they're protected against these kinds of sales practices.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I thank the member for York-Mackenzie for the question. Yes, I am concerned about the number of complaints the ministry is receiving with respect to this. In fact not only that, but I'm sure many of us here have personally experienced how annoying it is to have someone come to your door, not explain who they are, what the product they're selling is or the terms of whatever the contract is. The complaints have revolved around poor disclosure of details and misleading statements and failure to really explain the conditions of any types of proposed rebates.

I have written to the chair of the direct purchase industry committee. I've outlined my concerns to him and also indicated to him that we will ensure compliance with the Business Practices Act. Consumers should be aware that this type of practice is covered under the Business Practices Act, which prohibits unfair business practices, including false, misleading and deceptive representations to consumers.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Clearly, if the industry itself will not take the measures to protect consumers and inform them, we will.

**Mr Klees:** Minister, I'm glad to hear you're taking that initiative. I think it is important for the people of this province to recognize that there is a legitimate forum within which they can choose alternative suppliers. It's important that they also know that the government is going to take whatever initiatives it needs to take if in fact the industry is not going to do that. Is there anything that individual consumers can do to protect themselves?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** There are a number of measures that the consumer can take. Certainly they should remember that the savings apply only to the gas supply charge, which is about one third of the total gas bill, and the savings will fluctuate with changes in the market prices of gas. It's important for them to know whom they're dealing with. The agents who are going are representing independent businesses and are not associated with the government and certainly not with the major gas utilities. It's very important for them to inform themselves and to read the fine print before signing things.

I can tell the consumer this: We fully expect that the industry itself will take some measures to address these complaints, because it is in their best interests to do so. But if they do not, our government will take swift measures to make sure we clean up this confusion for consumers and make sure we protect consumers across the province.

## FUND-RAISING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and it has to do with activities out of your office regarding fund-raising. You may or may not be familiar with it, but it has come to our attention that fund-raising activities on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party are being, I gather, run out of your office. Faxes are being sent out of your office for fund-raising activities. There is an event on tonight involving a $200-per-person fee to go to the event and the response number is the minister's office. I wonder if you've had an opportunity to review that and if you are now prepared to stand to acknowledge that this was inappropriate and to take the appropriate steps.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank the honourable member for Scarborough-Agincourt for his question. I was made aware of that this morning. It was a situation that certainly was not tolerable. The young man has admitted that he made a mistake. He has tendered his resignation and I have accepted it. I have instructed my staff to review any costs that may be involved in phoning or faxing and those will be reimbursed. The young man did make a mistake, and I apologize for that. He has apologized, but he has also tendered his resignation and it has been accepted.

**1450**

**Mr Phillips:** It raises the issue of the standards the Premier sets for the cabinet, the instructions that you've been given by the Premier on what things are and are not appropriate in the minister's office, and what steps are taken as new staff people are brought on to your staff.

My question is this: Are you prepared to release publicly the instructions that the Premier gave you and the other ministers on such activities and to indicate to us, as staff come on to ministers' staff, are they briefed on these procedures? And are you prepared to tell the House how in the world it could be that well over two years into Mike Harris's regime things like this are still occurring in ministers' offices?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** This young man came as a summer student. He's a university student. He worked in our office for two months and he worked on right-to-farm legislation and a number of other things. I have reiterated the rules, the dos and don'ts of the minister's office.

You know, the Liberals are not completely clean on this, because fraudulent faxes were sent from Liberal headquarters here at Queen's Park in June 1994. By using the Bell Canada call trace service it was found that the fax originated from the Liberal caucus community outreach at Queen's Park. The Liberals apologized. It was their fax machine, it was their student and they said their student was reprimanded. So we're not all aboveboard on this. It's a situation where we asked the young man to tender his resignation, and he has.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, member for Algoma.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** It's a novel defence, that we're all guilty.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. This morning the minister told the Ontario Teachers' Federation annual meeting that he intended to introduce a fair funding system for schools in Ontario.

We know from a leak to the newspaper yesterday that the government intends to review the fairness of repealing school board taxing rights in five years' time. According to the newspaper, a standing committee of the Legislature will have to answer whether or not the fairness of the funding model is appropriate, whether it is indeed fair. Could the minister explain to the House today what are his criteria for fairness in funding schools in Ontario?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for Algoma for the question. Yes, this government announced some time ago our intention to get rid of the general legislative grant program that has been funding education in Ontario for some time, a system that various outside consultants have looked at over the course of I guess a couple of decades now and decided was flawed because it produced second-class students in Ontario by virtue of the amount of funding they had.

It's our intention to bring together an allocation model that will meet the needs of individual students right across the province, and we recognize that those might be different needs between urban schools and rural schools, northern schools and southern schools. We have in place now expert panels that are working on parts of that allocation model, working with experts in the teaching field, working with experts in the building field and deciding on what the benchmarks should be for that formula.

I believe at the end of the day this government, now and five years from now, will be committed to a funding system that's fair by virtue of giving every student in Ontario an opportunity for a quality education. That's what our objective is.

**Mr Wildman:** In our view, the outstanding measure of fairness in education is the success and the health and safety of children in our schools. Apparently, the minister's business panel is working on developing a new funding formula, looking at one based on $5.50 per square foot for the costs of heating, lighting, custodial care and maintenance of our schools.

The Legislative Assembly staff have informed us that it costs $10 per square foot for basic services for this precinct. This doesn't include painting, repairs or other maintenance. The Toronto Real Estate Board tells us that the average cost of business accommodation in downtown Toronto, the financial core, is $23.14 per square foot. Is $5.50 per square foot for the things that ensure the safety and the health of our students a fair figure?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Again I thank the member for Algoma for the question. The member beside me just noted that you would expect that the costs in this precinct would be lower because the heating bills would be reduced due to the amount of hot air generated in this chamber on a daily basis.

**Mr Wildman:** Keep it up. Keep it up.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I didn't suggest on either side, member for Algoma.

I know the member for Algoma has recognized that we do have experts in the building trades, people who operate buildings, people who've operated school buildings, who are looking now at what the benchmarks for cost should be. I believe the people of Ontario are satisfied that it is time to look at these various components of funding education and make sure we're getting the best value so that we can concentrate our dollars, concentrate our efforts in the classroom where we can make a difference with our students so that we can finally lift student achievement in Ontario to what our goal is, and that is to have the children of this province obtain the best test scores anywhere in Canada. We won't stop till that's done.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** My question is to —

*Applause.*

**Mr Pettit:** I acknowledge the approval of the opposition parties. Thank you very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Pettit:** I'd like to acknowledge the approval of the two opposition parties.

My question today is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. It's in the largest cities of this province that we see the biggest problems with welfare fraud, and every dollar that is taken fraudulently means less help for those who really need it. This is unfair and can't continue. Please tell us what your ministry is doing to stop this.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, through you to the honourable member for his question. I know he's been quite persistent.

The estimates of fraud have gone everywhere from 3% to 10%. The Provincial Auditor had made an estimate that it might well be worth $100 million in the system. We don't think that should be tolerated, and that's why we've done things like introduced a fraud hotline in the last year; tightened eligibility for teenagers so that they can't walk out and get a welfare cheque; why we're doing computer data matching with other programs, government agencies, so that we can catch people who are, as they say, double-dipping.

Our legislation is going to help us do more along these lines. We'll have tougher rules for those who try to abuse the system. We'll be able to use new technologies like finger scanning and our investigation officers will have additional authority. We want to make sure that to the extent possible we fight fraud and abuse wherever we can find them.

**Mr Pettit:** I know my region of Hamilton-Wentworth has been working diligently towards ensuring that no incidents of welfare fraud take place. This is good news to the constituents in my riding high atop Hamilton Mountain. Can you please tell us exactly how your ministry's measures have affected the region's ability to deal with this problem?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I've been quite impressed with the efforts that Hamilton-Wentworth has taken, through the cooperation of municipal staff, ministry staff and the police. They did sort of an ad hoc blitz which resulted in 54 arrests, with estimated savings of about $1 million. There's a joint police-social services management group that is helping them deal with cases of suspected fraud. I'm going to be down there next week to meet with them to see how they've made it work, because I would like to extend such cooperative arrangements and procedures across the province, if we can, to more successfully fight fraud.

**1500**

## DROUGHT RELIEF IN RENFREW

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. The minister will know that Renfrew county has been devastated this summer by some of the worst drought conditions we've faced in over 60 years. Last week his officials came to the county to meet with the farm leadership and to hear pleas for emergency assistance to cope with this serious drought situation. What can the minister tell the farmers of Renfrew county today as to the kind of emergency assistance he and his government are prepared to provide to those drought-stricken farmers?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Yes, I'm quite aware of the severe drought that is occurring in Renfrew county. I am in constant contact with the ag rep in Renfrew. Some senior officials of the ministry went last week. We are looking at all possibilities. We're setting up a meeting with the banking institution, with the Farm Credit Corp, to make sure they understand. I'm also attempting to contact the federal Minister of Agriculture, who comes from Ontario and who is quite understanding of the situation as well. We are providing some early payments for those who have crop insurance so that they can indeed use the moneys from their insurance proceeds to purchase particularly the forage they will be needing.

**Mr Conway:** The forage plan under the crop insurance program simply does not work in our part of the province. The minister knows that. The Crop Insurance Commission has been told that. As we speak, farmers in Renfrew county are breaking up their herds. They're faced with feed costs three and four times the normal amount.

What I need to know from the minister is, beyond early payouts through the crop insurance plan, what specific emergency relief is the Ontario government prepared to provide to farmers in Renfrew county who, if they don't get some emergency relief the like of what previous Ontario governments have provided in my time here, are not going to be in business in six to 12 months' time to talk to you, me or some far-distant expert?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** That's why we have had the meetings. That's why we will be meeting with the bankers. That's why I desperately want to discuss this with my federal colleague the Honourable Lyle Vanclief, who also understand the problem, because crop insurance is a tripartite project: farmers, federal government and provincial government. We have to remember that the forage program — and I agree with you. When you were the government, it didn't work very well, and you forced people into buying it. They bought it for one year after they received some support from the government. It did not work. We're still looking at making it work better. It's under AgriCorp, by farmers, and they will be looking at it.

I simply tell the honourable member for Renfrew North that I understand very well the problems those families are facing. I, as a farmer, have faced those problems in the past, and we will do whatever we can.

## MUNICIPAL TAXATION

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minis-

ter, as a result of your government's downloading policies, northern Ontario will be most severely impacted. Our figures estimate that some $292 million will be the approximate shortfall. In fact, in the district of Thunder Bay residents can expect to pay anywhere between $700 and $800 more. Across northern Ontario the tax increases will be of a magnitude of some 20%. I wish to ask the minister, what contingency plan do you have to make up for the shortfall and for the imminent, impending increases, and what are the criteria to access that pool of money to make up the difference?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the member of the third party: As I told his colleague some few minutes ago, we will be meeting with many of the municipalities, with AMO, on Monday, and we will be discussing strategies to distribute the municipal restructuring fund, the fund that has been set up to ensure that any municipality that has a shortfall as a result of transfers will not have to raise property taxes, because I think every taxpayer in Ontario recognizes that this is not a government that raises taxes; this is a government that cuts taxes. We also recognize that there is only one taxpayer and we are not going to do anything that causes taxes to rise in one area as a result of tax decreases in another. That's not our program and we're going to ensure that municipalities remain revenue-neutral as a result of the trades of the Who Does What program.

**Mr Pouliot:** You're short of guaranteeing that there shall be no tax increases.

By way of supplementary, yesterday I received correspondence signed by your distinguished colleague the Minister of Finance, refusing to meet with Mayor Don McKay. Mayor McKay has responsibility, has tenure with the largest municipality, Marathon, in the riding of Lake Nipigon.

I want to talk briefly about Marathon by way of a question to illustrate the unique situation — so far it hasn't been addressed by any ministry. Marathon has a tax base — when we couple general purpose and education, 75% of the cost is taken on by mining and pulp and paper. It leaves 25% at the residential level. When you factor in the pooling of education costs, it leaves them at the residential level very little room to manoeuvre, so they are disproportionately impacted, and they will come and knock on your door because this is most legitimate. They will pay, pay and pay again.

Four months before implementation, what do you tell Mayor McKay? What do you tell the residential taxpayers in Terrace Bay, in Marathon —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'd like to point out to the member of the third party that we recognize there are going to be some municipalities in this province which are going to have unique circumstances and we're quite prepared to deal with those unique circumstances. That's precisely the reason we set up two implementation teams, one for municipal services and one for social services, implementation teams made up of members of municipalities right across the province, people who have expertise on how to deal with some of the unique problems that we recognize are going to be facing some municipalities.

We've set up special funds to help those municipalities. We've set up expert panels to work with those municipalities and myself, and many of my colleagues are also going to be at the meeting of municipalities that will be held in Toronto next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, to discuss and provide advice on how municipalities can ensure their taxpayers do not face a tax increase in 1998.

## PETITIONS

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature and I wish to read it.

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I concur with the content of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

### WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only about 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, woman-centre focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

I am proud to affix my signature.

**1510**

## COURT DECISION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** For a couple of days now I've been trying to present this petition and I thank you for recognizing me. I have a letter here from one of my constituents, a Mrs Carlo Haluka, who has been fighting for this program the best of anyone I've seen.

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to ban going topless in public places."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

## CREMATORIUM IN VAUGHAN

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a further petition addressed to the Ontario Legislature, the Ontario Municipal Board and the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

"Re: Amendments to the city of Vaughan official plan and zoning bylaws to permit a cemetery, columbarium, crematorium and chapel on a 1.769-hectare site at the northeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue West in the city of Vaughan:

"We, the undersigned, object strongly to the cemetery, columbarium and crematorium that the city of Vaughan has approved so close to our residential community at the abovenoted location in the city of Vaughan. All of us live in the city of North York but in very close proximity to this proposed use. We object to having a large-scale death industry including a cemetery and the burning of human bodies as a daily event, literally on our own doorsteps.

"We are appalled that a conservation authority and the city of Vaughan municipality would do this to us and we ask for your help to stop it. We ask the Minister of Environment to intervene and stop it now. The health of a thousand residents will be at risk. We urge you not to grant approval for this project."

I concur and I will affix my signature to the petition.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly here in Queen's Park, addressed specifically to the Honourable Minister of Environment and Energy, Norm Sterling.

"Whereas the fire at a PVC plastic vinyl plant located in the middle of one of Hamilton's residential areas burned for three days; and

"Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and called for a limited voluntary evacuation of several blocks around the site; and

"Whereas the burning of PVC results in the formation and release of toxic substances such as dioxins and furans as well as large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold a full public inquiry on the Hamilton Plastimet fire; and further

"We, the undersigned, request that the Ministry of Environment and the government of Ontario take responsibility for the immediate cleanup of the fire site."

I appreciate the support of these citizens and add my name to theirs.

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I have a petition signed by residents in the riding of Niagara South from Wainfleet and Port Colborne mostly, and it reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals and their numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province; and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario and black bears are a well-managed renewable resource; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourist operators in northern Ontario is $30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign of misinformation and emotional rhetoric to ban bear hunting and end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting."

Being in agreement with this petition, I put my signature on it.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition signed by approximately 90 residents of Ontario. It reads:

"We, the undersigned concerned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the public has the right to be informed about proposed bills and that there be enough time for public hearings about proposed bills.

"We believe the opposition MPPs should have adequate time to study bills proposed to have a chance to suggest amendments. We therefore do not support the proposed ruling of the Ontario Conservatives that they pass a bill in only two weeks after introducing it and introduce two bills in the same two-week period.

"We feel this proposed change to the rules of the House is unwarranted and unfair to the people of Ontario."

I support the petition, even though the rules were forced through yesterday.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** On behalf of my constituents of Durham East, for example, Stan and Ruth Weynich, I present this petition:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code and reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to ban going topless in public places."

I am pleased to sign my name to this petition.

## WELLESLEY CENTRAL HOSPITAL

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I have a petition here of great urgency particularly with respect to the health restructuring that's currently taking place. It deals with the Wellesley Central Hospital Staying Alive campaign. It states:

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the decision of closing Wellesley Central Hospital. We see this as cutting services, which will negatively affect the overall health of our community.

"We are deeply concerned about our future health care for treatment of acute illnesses and for emergency care.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the only solution."

It's signed by some 25 people and I've affixed my signature.

## WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women; and

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to researching women's health; and

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's; and

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs; and

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America; and

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

This petition has been signed by 53 residents of Toronto. I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to it.

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** We're going for the triple today. I am pleased to present another petition here from a Mr Ray Shaw who lives in Enniskillen, Ontario. He's written a very long letter along with it, and I thank him for that letter.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals and their numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province" — and we've heard of some of the outbreaks this summer in our provincial parks — "and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario and black bears are a well-managed, renewable resource; and

"Whereas black bear hunting replaces natural mortality and reduces cannibalism among bears; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourism in Ontario represents some $30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign of misinformation and emotional rhetoric to ban bear hunting and end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting in this province."

I am pleased to read this into the record and sign my name.

**1520**

## WELLESLEY CENTRAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** As you know, the Mike Harris government has ordered the closure of 11 hospitals here in Metro, and I've got one petition here to support the Wellesley Central Hospital Staying Alive campaign.

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the decision of closing Wellesley Central Hospital. We see this as cutting services, which will negatively affect the overall health of our community.

"We are deeply concerned about our future health care for treatment of acute illness and for emergency care.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the only solution."

I support Wellesley's attempts to stay alive despite the Mike Harris campaign to cut them, and I'll sign this petition.

## PETITIONS

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by 30 residents of this province. It states:

"Whereas standing order 36 states rules for presentation of petitions;

"Whereas the Office of the Clerk was contacted for a free copy of four pages of rules;

"We, the concerned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that:

"We want our petitions to have more recognition than being either filed with the Clerk of the House or mentioned in the House with a brief statement summarizing the contents and the number of signatures on the petitions.

"We want the text of petitions to be allowed to be read in the House," which is what I'm doing.

"We want debate about petitions to be allowed in the House.

"We want the 15 minutes per day maximum time limit dedicated to petitions to be dropped and attention to petitions to be allowed to take all sessional day if necessary.

"In summary, we find it unacceptable that our combined voice in the form of petitions is given such disrespectful treatment."

## COURT DECISION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** This may constitute a record; however, we will continue. I am pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to ban going topless in public places."

I am pleased to affix my name to this petition for the last time today.

# REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 132, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario / Project de loi 132, Loi visant à adopter un tartan officiel pour l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Shall Bill 132 be ordered for third reading? Agreed? Agreed.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, could you check and see if there is a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** We will move to introduction of bills.

# INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## KOREAN CANADIAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO ACT, 1997

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr87, An act respecting the Korean Canadian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1997
## LOI DE 1997 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES

Mrs Ecker moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to improve Services, increase Efficiency and benefit Taxpayers by eliminating Duplication and reallocating Responsibilities between Provincial and Municipal Governments in various areas and to implement other aspects of the Government's "Who Does What" Agenda / Projet de loi 152, Loi visant à améliorer les services, à accroître l'efficience et à procurer des avantages aux contribuables en éliminant le double emploi et en redistribuant les responsabilités entre le gouvernement provincial et les municipalités dans divers secteurs et visant à mettre en oeuvre d'autres aspects du programme «Qui fait quoi» du gouvernement.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Not at this time.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1997 (NO. 2)
## LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO (N$^{O}$ 2)

Mr Leach moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new City of Toronto / Projet de loi 148, Loi traitant de questions se rapportant à la constitution de la nouvelle cité de Toronto.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Today I'm bringing forward for second reading a bill which would ensure that the day-to-day services people use and expect will still be in place when the new city of Toronto comes into being on January 1, 1998.

As my colleagues will recall, we are creating one strong unified city in order to promote improved economic development in the area, to reduce waste and duplication, to save taxpayers money and to provide better accountability.

The City of Toronto Act, 1997, which became law in April, provided the framework for the new city structure, and when it was drafted it was with the understanding that a second piece of legislation would be required to deal with administrative, technical and specific transitional matters around the move to one city.

One of the primary functions of the second bill is to ensure that certain agencies and boards, including the Toronto Transit Commission, Exhibition Place and the Metro zoo, can continue to operate after January 1 as they always have. This is no less than those in the new city would deserve and expect.

Second, this bill would ensure that all services currently available to residents in Metro continue uninterrupted. The new city would be legally authorized, as its predecessors were under the Metro Toronto act, to provide ambulance services, operate the Toronto Island ferry, regulate street vending, police the Toronto harbour, operate homes for the aged, plan and act in emergencies. They could enter into water supply and sewage treatment agreements with other municipalities, operate conservation authority lands, operate a licensing commission and so on. These would not be new powers for the new city. They would simply be a continuation of powers currently afforded to Metro council, powers which will allow the new city to carry out its routine responsibilities as residents expect.

A third aspect of this bill deals with protecting pensions and benefits of municipal and local board employees and retirees. There is no question that these very important obligations should continue to be honoured by the new city, and this would occur under our proposed bill.

The city of Toronto's second bill would also deal with specific transitional issues. For example, it would allow official plans of former municipalities to continue until such time as the new council wishes to adopt a new official plan.

The bill confirms that there would be one public health board, one library board, one historical board and one parking authority to ensure a cohesive structure is in place in the unified city.

**1530**

Last but not least, our bill would allow the new city council to develop an area rating scheme which would help sort out any financial imbalances or service level disparities in the various municipalities over time. The new council could, for example, examine a former municipality's total financial picture and make adjustments to tax rates which would reflect their findings. In other words, if a former municipality had substantial reserve funds and very little debt and liabilities, the council could lower tax rates in the area of the former municipality and could do so over an eight-year period. That seems only fair to me, as I'm sure it does to everyone.

*Applause.*

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Only one applauding.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Obviously the member for St Catharines is opposed to that for some reason.

In bringing forward this bill for second reading, we are moving one step closer to better government.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Leach:** Also showing a sign indicating his IQ.

The evidence supporting the benefits of one strong city and one mayor and 56 councils is considerable. A unified Toronto will capture the imagination of business investors worldwide, and that means we will stand a better chance of attracting investment and strengthening the local and greater area economy. One strong council and one mayor will replace seven competing voices.

The new city structure will mean better political accountability. Taxpayers won't have to deal with different levels of government. There will also be community councils bringing together councillors from adjoining wards to work on issues that affect neighbourhoods in the same area. As you know, the transition team is involved in public consultations to determine the potential role of community councils.

One unified city will also result in an end of waste and duplication. The new city structure will permit the establishment of one fire department to replace six, one roads department and not seven, and will mean a cohesive amalgamation of many services.

Finally, one strong city will help create a solid greater Toronto area core. A unified Toronto will have the population, political representation and clout to ensure that the greater Toronto area and Ontario continue to be the economic engine of the country.

In conclusion, let me say that this bill is necessary from a technical and administrative point of view for the new city to be completely operational on January 1, 1998. It will ensure that the new city council has the authority to continue to carry out routine responsibilities when the new city comes into being. It will also reassure residents that the transition to their new city is well under way and that a more efficient, effective and less costly government structure will result.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** It's very interesting to listen to the minister this afternoon. It seems to me that he really hasn't added anything to the megacity bill that was introduced some time ago. Certainly from the speech he just gave, you wouldn't think there was anything in this bill at all that hasn't already been passed.

I can only come to the conclusion, without having had an opportunity to review the bill in detail, that what he's trying to do now is to make up for all those mistakes that were made in the original megacity bill that he tried to ram through the Legislature as quickly as possible, that was brought in almost in the darkness of the night.

It's beyond me why we're revisiting this whole issue again. I suppose it's mainly there so that the citizens of Toronto, the citizens of the six cities here right now, can be agitated once again by the total incompetence of this particular government.

Minister, I think it would be very honourable for you to stand in your place and admit today that you made a mega-mistake when you brought in your first megacity bill some four or five months ago, that you really didn't know what you were doing and that you now have to clean up the mess by bringing in all sorts of amendments to that bill because it wasn't drafted correctly in the first place. That's the real reason we're going through this all again.

There may very well be additional things in the bill that you should have thought of when you brought in the first megacity bill but didn't at that point in time. One of the reasons this House has to sit so often, the people of Ontario should know, is because this government is making so many mistakes on an ongoing basis that it has to bring in more and more legislation to clean up the legislative mistakes they made in the first place.

We look forward to debating this bill once again and showing that you're totally wrong and incorrect in bringing this forward at this time.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** I rise just to make a few comments about the introduction of this bill and basically to dispel some of the misinformation we've just heard from the member for Kingston and The Islands. The fact is that we intended, before we even brought in the first Toronto bill, to bring in a second bill.

I want to go back to the fact that I remember that this same member across the floor, when we brought in Bill 26, which had multiple aspects to it, objected to it and said, "This is not right that you have so much in one single bill." One of the basic problems the Liberals always have is that they want to have it every which way.

The fact is, when you have good government, you have to make sure that everything that you do is reasoned. Sometimes you don't have all the pieces together at any one time, and you have to make sure you get all those pieces together prior to moving forward. That's exactly what we're doing with the second Toronto bill, which is interlocking with the first but is a separate piece of legislation which will achieve the goals we have set out; that is, that the municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto can be integrated into one municipality, which will lead to savings which the hard-pressed property taxpayers desperately need.

We identified that 72% of all the expenditures by municipalities within the metropolitan area was done by Metropolitan Toronto. The opposition objected and fought against the consolidation of a city which was essentially already operating as one but we still had all the trappings of seven administrations. We had separate parks departments, separate lib — legal departments.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Turnbull:** Yes, liberal departments. They were liberal in their spending.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further questions or comments? None? Minister, you may respond.

**1540**

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'd just like to point out to the member for Kingston and The Islands that when Bill 103 was introduced we pointed out very clearly that it provided the framework for the creation of the new, single, unified city and that we would be coming back with a second bill outlining the administrative and technical details required to make the new city work well. That's exactly what this bill will do.

It provides the mechanisms to ensure that agencies, boards and commissions can continue to function. The Toronto Transit Commission, the Metro zoo, Exhibition Place, the Hummingbird Centre, all those boards and commission and establishments need legislation in place to

ensure that they can continue to provide the fine services that they provide to the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto.

This bill is an administrative and technical bill. It's one that is absolutely necessary. I'm sure it will have the support of all parties of the House to make sure that when the new city of Toronto comes into place on January 1, 1998, all of its citizens are protected with the services they now have, with all the emergency services that are there to protect them. I know that the members of the Liberal Party and the members of the New Democratic Party will be glad to support a bill that ensures that the citizens of this great community are well protected.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask permission to share my time with the member for Oakwood.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there consent for the member to share his time with the member for Oakwood? Agreed.

**Mr Kennedy:** It is, of course, with mixed feelings that I have to respond to this son of megacity bill. There shouldn't be any misleading on the part of members opposite, any thought that the quiet in this House today represents —

**Mr Turnbull:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The language being used is totally unacceptable, the suggestion that there's some misleading being done by members opposite.

**The Acting Speaker:** I understand that the word was used. My understanding is that the member for York South was not accusing the government members, but if the member was, I may have misheard, and I would ask him to withdraw it. If he did not, then maybe he can explain. Go ahead, member for York South.

**Mr Kennedy:** It is important the members opposite not be misled that the quiet in the House today represents anything that has changed fundamentally in these cities, which are still Metropolitan Toronto, Etobicoke, Scarborough, North York, York, Toronto and East York; that these cities have changed one iota in their view of the bully tactics this government has used to bring about this son of megacity bill.

We know that if this is the son of megacity, then the illegitimate son of megacity just passed, the rule changes that this government also saw fit to bring about because they couldn't have their way, as their ministers stamped their feet because they couldn't go fast enough. They couldn't go fast enough to wreck the things that make this province the great province it has been until the advent of this singleminded Harris government, this tax-cut-preoccupied government, this government that cannot find room in it and in its major cities for some level of diversity and certainly for some level of dissent.

We see today the product of the rushed nature of the Comic Book Revolution, the whole idea of how this government is perpetrating on the rest of the province a rearrangement of the largest city we have, a city that has received justified accolades. It's not a perfect one but rather one that was evolving on its own, able to deal with all manner of diversity, able to bring together a huge number of people in a way that boded well for the civilized nature of the society we aspire to.

All that is brought into question by this bill which purports to do some more rearranging of the deckchairs, and in reality what we have is still an empty shell. The original bill spoke not at all about the future of a megacity; it spoke instead about transition teams and boards which took over control and all kinds of things that until now have been foreign to this province.

We know that most people in this city, while they may not be in the galleries today — many of them have been barred from this place, consistent with the outlook of this government to hamper and handcuff dissent. The ones who came yesterday to assemble for a hospital were told that under the new rules they can't attend in the galleries, even when they come in peaceful assembly in this province. And people came in peaceful assembly. Ten thousand of them marched in the streets.

People met, and still meet, week after week, hoping to sustain some of the value of this city in the face of this attack, and this bill is an attack, and has the effrontery to use the name "Toronto," which has taken on a certain kind of value for the people who helped to fashion that, and it has the effrontery to erase the identities of the other parts of this metropolitan area.

We certainly have to reflect as we look at the last pieces of this government's extremely clumsy agenda in the largest area of the province. We recognize that it's not only clumsy and awkward and driven by the tax cut as it seeks to download millions and millions of dollars on to the taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto, but it also represents a certain quality about this government. Its ability to cite a certain kind of promise, whether it's, "We will not close hospitals," as Mike Harris said on May 18 — but Mike Harris also said, "There's no cost for a municipality to maintain its name and identity."

This is what the taxpayers heard, this is what the residents of Scarborough heard, this is what the residents of York Mills heard ahead of the election. They said, "We'll maintain your identity." This is what the Progressive Conservatives said and many of them, including the current minister proposing this second bill, said ahead of time they would sustain the name and identity.

"Why destroy our roots and pride," said our current Premier. "I disagree with restructuring because it believes that bigger is better. Services always cost more in larger communities" is what Mike Harris said, and by God, on that score he's absolutely right. We're headed for higher costs. We're headed for all kinds of tax increases, because of course the real motivation for this clumsy and awkward arrangement, this knocking down of walls without any sense of direction ,is to find room for the biggest tax download that has ever taken place in this province, for dumping services that didn't have any relationship to the value of one's property, that break all the rules when it comes to essential fairness in terms of taxation.

The residents of St George-St David and of High Park-Swansea are going to find that in their property tax, as a companion of the megacity, they're now paying for public

and non-profit housing, paying for housing stock that needs not small renovations but huge rebuilding to sustain it, to sustain the level of affordability and that civilized life which this government has now grasped with both hands in an effort to snuff out some of those qualities in this metropolitan area.

We see where ambulance services will have to compete with potholes in the roads, where we'll have to pay for our own transit, where municipal support grants will be erased. We see that the public housing download in particular means $365 million dumped on to property taxpayers, coming as a present from the 15 members that the Progressive Conservatives have purportedly representing this area still known as Metropolitan Toronto, still known as Scarborough and East York and York and Toronto.

I can tell you even in the neighbourhood of Mount Dennis, where I believe the minister opposite spent part of his early life, where his mother still lives, they will remember that part of their identity has been taken away, part of their ability to operate in this city, their ability to function as members of a complex system but still have a way of connecting. The city of York is where the Mount Dennis Ratepayers' Association has had its impact, and that has been taken away. They've been left with the vagaries of a community council, the maybe of being able to talk to their representatives, of driving downtown, not taking the subway because that was also cancelled by this particular government.

All across the city are people who know how fragile the civilized society that we have in this metropolitan area is and how important it is that we have structures flexible enough to deal with that, to be able to provide a sense of identity and a sense of belonging. There were marchers from Mount Dennis on the Legislature, in the 10,000 peaceful protesters that didn't have just the usual suspects, that had many of the people who voted Conservative in the last election and many of the people who are going to remember the next time around that this megacity bill, not advertised in the Comic Book Revolution, is just a clumsy attempt by this government to try and provide a smokescreen for its downloading, for its dumping on one of the most successful urban areas anywhere in North America.

We recognize too the model that we're being patterned on. In their desperation, the government is turning to the only other areas in North America that have more than two million people under a single government: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago. Those are the kinds of places that Mike Harris would bring us to with this son of megacity bill. These are the kinds of living conditions that they would see imported.

It'll fit in well with the Americanization of health care, which is what is on the boards with the closing of hospitals, with the rendering of budgets, 12% cuts. Every member opposite has sat silent while in their neighbourhoods the drip, drip, drip of health services ebbing away, being taken away by this government trying to fund a tax cut, putting a tax cut ahead of a liveable city, ahead of basic services like health care.

That's what this government has done and continues to do today in this Legislature with this bill as they rub salt in the wound of Metropolitan Toronto, which voted 76%; 76% of the people who came out to vote. Many of the people sitting here were elected municipally with probably less vote. In Mount Dennis they voted 76%, and that was a higher turnout than they had for the municipal election.

**1550**

Especially in terms of the value of this city, those people represent the opinion, and they represent the memory that will sustain around the city of Toronto, the city of York, around Scarborough, around North York. Those are the kinds of things people are going to remember when it comes time to render a real decision on this bill. We recognize that we've had our rights circumscribed, that this government not only sees itself fit to use its majority in any bully way it can, but it takes away the ability of the members opposite to act. It did that with the rule changes this week that will offer half the number of question periods as they move the bills through twice as fast. This is a companion characteristic.

The downloading bill has in it all the characteristics anyone needs to know about this government. On the one hand, the government would tell us that it's good for you. In reality, it costs you money, it takes away some of the values you believe in and it harms people as we do it.

We're going to be invited over the next number of months to invite the municipalities to do what this government was too afraid to do. As part of its cost-cutting exercise, it's simply dumping on municipalities in such a fashion. Particularly here, under the disguise of the megacity, it hopes that by dumping on them, by having the confusion of the megacity, they'll exact cuts on vulnerable people, on people who need housing, on people who live in hostels, on people who need assistance through other municipal programs and general welfare. They're going to be, instead, hurt to pay for the tax cut that is the single driving objective this government has.

The epitaph, unfortunately, for this government will be a profound amount of change that was done, not out of the public interest but out of the singular interest of advancing an ideology that would deliver tax cuts to people who are better off, that would destroy government without even looking at the intrinsic value.

We know that experts anywhere in the world would attest to the fact —Wendell Cox, all kinds of people, the only objective studies, and in fact even the author of the one shoddy report we saw from this government, as a pretext for what they're doing, would say there is no evidence this is going to save money. But any other expert would go much further and say that in fact — as Mike Harris did before he was elected, before he needed this, before he needed to downgrade the quality of life in Metropolitan Toronto, before that became an imperative for him, before that was something he had to do. He said: "No, we'll keep identities. We'll keep reasonably sized communities." But this government has forgotten what communities are.

This may be a unique opportunity to be able to quote Terence Corcoran, to be able to do that approvingly, to talk, as he does, about the urban mega-project of Mike Harris, to say how this is part of a trend, part of an attitude on the part of this government, a government that does not appear to have any genuine reform policies, according to Terence Corcoran of the Globe and Mail, but instead has seized upon the old, old idea that somehow bigger is better.

Where, outside of the Soviet Politburo, have we seen so many tendencies to make things bigger, to assign responsibility that belongs to the people who occupy those seats, who draw down the salaries, who have been elected in places like Willowdale and Scarborough East and Scarborough Centre?

They're supposed to take the job, the responsibility. Right there, in York Mills, that member should be taking the responsibility of saying what should be happening. Instead we have unelected commissions and we have megacities and we have mega-school boards and we have mega-hospitals. We have a government with no grip on what actually delivering government services that can be effective will actually mean.

We've seen what's happened in every population above a million that's been aggrandized like this, pulled together: The cost of services per capita goes up. We find these Reform-Conservatives in the unique position of having given us a number of hand grenades that will go off at appropriate times in the future. Not only have they taken away some of the ability to retain a high quality of civic life in this area; they've also given us these exploding costs we'll have in the future, because this is not alone on the Conservative agenda for Metropolitan Toronto.

This is part of the attack on hospitals that takes away the best hospital we have for women in the province, located in a very accessible area, that is giving what unfortunately the government will not comprehend. I toured it the day before yesterday. It is not a dingy hospital. The Premier has no right to put down Women's College Hospital in that substantive and dismissive way. Some of those Metro members, the representatives of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Etobicoke-Humber, Don Mills, from High Park-Swansea, should have been standing up on behalf of Women's College Hospital, standing up on behalf of the taxpayers in their areas. Instead we have an abandonment. We have an abandonment of Toronto just as surely as if those 15 Conservative members had resigned their seats.

We see nothing on the current agenda that is for the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto. We see their level of government stripped away. We see higher costs put in. We see market value assessment. In each of your neighbourhoods you're bringing in higher taxes because of that. You put a download with social housing. You're making them pay for costs that are going to vary according to the economy, having nothing to do with their ability to pay. You're doing that. You are doing that to Metropolitan Toronto, to the neighbourhoods you canvassed during the election and told you would keep their identity. We see some of the bankruptcy of the comic book revolution when it can't provide even to its own members a level of dissent. We can't have in this government, even in their own caucus rooms, apparently, the ability to believe they're speaking up for us.

We need only hear the comments of the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore on the radio last night when he said, "We're in trouble." Unfortunately, there are only a few members opposite who understand that basic precept. He said, "We're in trouble because people believe we don't care." He knows that, but sadly, very few opposite know that.

Perhaps it's because of what the member for Wentworth North said about this government, that what we're really dealing with here are not individual members, not people we elected to represent Metropolitan Toronto who walk its streets and know what people have to go through every day and know the effort that's made here to keep a place that recognizes diversity, that is a success economically and aspires to be one socially; instead, "'We have a government that's controlled by the Premier's office,' says the member for Wentworth North. 'It's controlled in conjunction with a bunch of kids who I say have a college or university degree in one hand and Machiavelli's Prince on the other and not a whole lot in between.' He added, 'These are people who, for ideological reasons, are coming up with this policy."

That's what the dissident members of caucus have said, but we wouldn't know that here in Metropolitan Toronto because there are so few, because we haven't heard that voice, because we haven't seen it applied to the megacity. Instead of being able to govern, we have a government that's on remote control. The buttons are in the Premier's office and the circuitry has been taken out of everyone else's. We look at the lack of vision, the lack of fundamental understanding of what kind of place we need to have in terms of Metropolitan Toronto, and we see that lack of comprehension that this is a group of people forming a government, willing to jeopardize our ability to remain responsive, to keep certain values people have of civility, of being able to react to one another.

When we first organized food drives in Metropolitan Toronto, people said: "Forget about it. People won't respond to that. They won't donate food. They don't do that kind of thing. This is a big city." In fact, it's more than that. It has the capacity — we'll struggle, I'm sure, to try and retain it, but it's had the capacity — to act like a small town, to act like a place where people don't feel isolated and lost but feel like they belong. That's brought about by the flexibility and the accommodation which this bill and the one that went before it would like to suck right out of what is here in Metropolitan Toronto.

It's unfortunate, and it's unfortunate even more because the members opposite don't get it. They don't understand how to be able to provide us with that. We know that the many questions this bill leaves unanswered will continue to be unanswered. There simply are not the people in that caucus presenting to us their view in terms of how we're going to be able to take that city that did work, that is recognized around the world, still winning assessments year

after year as the most livable place — how when they take away some of those essential ingredients, we're going to be able to sustain a good quality of living.

**1600**

The good news for you is, as guilty as you must feel about your abdication of responsibility, there will be others who will be working hard to not let you get away with wrecking Metropolitan Toronto.

We were there December 17. We declared our policy. We were against this bill before the download, before it became apparent what kind of Trojan horse this was. We knew in our support of the referendum that we had to have at least the opportunity to vote, to have expression before this bill was heard. This government wasn't even willing to provide that. This government wasn't even going to let the people of the cities that still exist as legal entities, where they pay their taxes, where they were supposed to have some control over their futures, vote. Instead they were going to pass this bill. With our efforts and the efforts of the other members of the opposition, we were able to make the government concede that much.

This government was also put through a slightly painful, according to the kind of heckling that happened from the members opposite, passage of this bill as it went through a certain level of necessary scrutiny and delay. This took an extraordinary measure on the part of the opposition, but a justifiable measure.

As you walk around Metropolitan Toronto you don't see people saying that was time wasted. You still see people saying, "Why are they moving so fast and what are they doing to the place where I live?" Unfortunately, this bill provides us with only some of the answers and much of the apprehension about where we're going. The people know that these closed-door operations, the kinds of things the government can only get away with when they operate behind those closed doors, are not going to be the way they're going to let us define the future.

You propose a city that is corporate in structure, that has no responsiveness to people, that is not going to be able to allow people to sustain an identity as they work and contribute and in some cases struggle to get by. You're going to take some of that away from them. What you leave them instead is a larger thing; again, a reference to Terence Corcoran, who sees in your government not a government that espouses Reform principles, but a government bankrupt of ideas, unable to do anything but mimic perhaps things that were left over in the closet of the bureaucracy.

Instead what we have is an ability here for people who are supposed to know around the things of community, the things that used to be associated with Conservatives — we don't really have Conservatives in the old sense, I guess. We have instead people who invent new principles, principles where there is no such thing as accountability. "We don't want to be accountable on the megacity," they say as they rush the bill through, as they subject today's discussion to a motion of closure —

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** You weren't around in 1989.

**Mr Kennedy:** — as they say to the people in Metropolitan Toronto, "We don't want to hear from you, and when we do, we won't pay attention."

I hear some heckling coming from the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, and we know that they remember there. We know how they voted there, and we know how they're going to vote again. We know that memory will be there as we try and deal with the mega-tendencies of this government visited upon some of the most fragile structures that exist: the very multicultural neighbourhoods, the poverty, the things that need to be handled in a way that allows not a contempt for democracy, but a respect for individuals.

Somehow these Conservatives have lost their way. They don't respect individuals any more. They only respect a monolithic form of government, a decision-making that is completely undemocratic, as I mentioned before, right down into the caucus. We learn instead that this is a government able to put together and to sustain support for this shell, this downgrading of the largest metropolitan area, and to do it in a way that's actually — the insult and indignity is so profound. We lose the cities that work, it's taken away, it's replaced with a half or a quarter of an idea from the whiz kids in the Premier's office, and we're going to have to pay through the nose for the privilege.

People will recognize that. They'll know where that download is coming from. They'll know where that increase in property taxes is going, and people won't be fooled in the municipal elections when they have to come to terms with what it's going to take to adjust to the choices this government would try and foist on them. Some people have erroneously said, "Here's a government that has a little bit of courage." It takes no courage to pass on tough decisions to other people, to hide behind the skirts of transition committees, to hide behind hospital and health restructuring committees. It takes no courage at all. It's sad that we find none.

We look to the 15 members of Metro for some articulation of what it's like to have a place that can work, a city that works, a city that Jane Jacobs chose to live in, a city that people all across North America admire for its ability to sustain that livability. Instead, we don't get anything. We hear a deafening silence.

We have had in this city a welling up that is not going to dissipate. This is not one that your political slide-rule is going to take care of. All your polling and all your adjusting and so on are not going to make this one go away. People have reserved a place in their collective memory for the backhanded way you have treated them through the course of this particular discussion, if I could dignify it as that. People will know that Bill 142, the megacity bill originally, the entire exercise is one of a government flagrantly out of control and ultimately out of touch. When people come to deliberate on this bill, they will indeed recognize the deficiency of the government and its paucity of ideas, not only the fixation on the tax cut, on taking services away from people, services needed in a metropolitan area like this, services which have been hard

fought for and paid for by the people who live in those areas.

As we look at a provincial property tax taking away some of the educational tax and using it as the province sees fit, as we see the province trying to justify a download that we see admitted today is going to cost the province at least $660 million, and as we see the idea of a city put forward only as something that is bigger and better, people will know instead that they have lost something. They will not necessarily concede the whole idea behind the opposition to the megacity that you've encountered and that will continue to sit there under the surface.

Unfortunately, as I've said in this place before, there is an attitude among the members opposite that suggests that instead of recognizing that they are only renting this place, they own it. That's simply not acceptable. When it comes to the people of the city of Toronto, they will want from you a level of accountability. When you rejected them and rejected their referendum, you said to them: "You can't have the cities you grew up in, that you had as the vehicles to provide your basic services in your neighbourhoods. You can't even have a say." Even though 95% of the people who came and gave some of the most eloquent presentations we've heard in committee in years, according to people who have sat in this place for a long time, even though they did those things, there was no listening by either the minister or the member for Scarborough West. There was no listening. There was instead an arrogance that has come to be the trademark of this government.

Cities will not be fashioned out of arrogance. It is only this government, now having spent these two years in this place, that somehow believes it is only the day after the election. They believe they've got a mandate from the people for everything they can dream up in the Premier's office. They believe that somehow they're able to get away from all the normal, civilized rules of behaviour and accountability, of responsibility.

Sadly, that's true today. That's what we have in front of us with this further bill, this bill that would try to fill in some of the massive gaps that were left in the original megacity bill, some of the emptiness, things that simply aren't there. If you look at the original bill, you see only four or five pages, six pages, telling us what the megacity will look like. Instead, it has been left up to an appointed transition team to fill in those gaps, again taking it out of the control of the elected representatives.

That's what we have instead: a huge question mark about its shape but a very clear definition about its problems. We know about the liabilities that are inherent in this bill. We know what it will do in terms of taking rights away from people. We know what it represents in terms of a precedent for municipalities all across the province.

**Mr Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think there's a quorum in the House. Would you look, please?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Is there a quorum present?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for York South.

**1610**

**Mr Kennedy:** The mega-tendencies of this government's profoundly anti-democratic outlook are, sadly, bad enough, and it's what has inspired the people of Metropolitan Toronto to express themselves in unprecedented ways throughout the course of the discussion, such as it is, the truncated discussion, as these bills have been rushed through the Legislature, as people have been hustled out of this House, from the audience, from the galleries, as people have been restricted in their ability to come here, as people have been treated, metaphorically at least, as if this wasn't a democratic society.

People recognize that this is not just about this government, that the character of a city will not be set simply by what the people here in this House, even on this side, would wish it to be, and certainly not by this government majority who believe Queen's Park is the centre of the universe, who have lost touch with their electorate, who won't speak to the people who have objections, who won't listen to the people when they get to express themselves.

In the absence of that, people are looking at this next bill which has been called administrative, and they'll wonder. They have been promised that there will be consolidation, and yet we find in this bill the ability for some cities to set different tax rates. We see that they can apply their surpluses in different ways, and so perhaps Etobicoke will have higher taxes than North York. Is that what we'll have? Were the members from Etobicoke speaking up on behalf of that? Is that the kind of thing we'll have? Instead of being able to look at the way these services would remain intact, we find the government trying, far too late, pander to some of the expressions people have.

What people don't want is just differential short-term taxes. What people want is an expression of the city they live in, and for at least the time that remains after this bill comes into effect January 1, people will still refer to themselves as citizens of Etobicoke. They'll talk about that. They'll talk to you about that in the next election. They'll talk to you about living in Scarborough, being members of North York, of the city of York, of East York, and they'll tell you how they feel about this bill.

You're able to hide here. This is a wonderful place to be out of touch. If you want to get away from the people who elected you, this is the place to do it. People have stood back, even from other parts of the country, in amazement at how this whole exercise has been bungled and clumsily mishandled. I have marvelled at the ability of the members of this caucus not to be able to speak up on behalf of the place they live, not to be able to say that we won't want to break something until we know we're going to get something better, until we know there is something wrong with what we're breaking, and that's exactly what we have in the case of the megacity.

Instead we've been handed this oversized city that now is inviting all kinds of negative responses. You talk to the people in Pickering about how they feel about paying for

welfare in Metropolitan Toronto around what this government is proposing to do. Had they instead looked at a larger government framework that gave them a say — all they needed to do was give them a say in terms of the types of things that were happening.

Where is the ability of this government to deal with even that fundamental level of democracy? Not able to connect the taxes that people are going to be paying with the services they're going to be able to have. We see this patching going on, one after another, as this government tries to stitch together any comprehensible, any recognizable form of acceptable government. We see instead Hazel McCallion opposing the kinds of things this government is doing, and doing that partly because they've been provoked by this sloppy bill, by this sloppy arrangement that doesn't really come to terms with what it is this government needed to do.

If there was a problem, the problem was a differing rate of taxes that exists within Metropolitan Toronto and without, and that's simply not going to be addressed in the way it should have been done. It should have been done fairly and instead it has to be foisted on some of the other municipalities.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kennedy:** We see some boisterousness among some of the caucus members here. We wish they'd exhibit some of that in caucus to the Premier so that some of this folly, this megacity folly, would perhaps not have been foisted on the people.

But we're reminded again by the member for Wentworth North that that's not how this government operates. That's not what we see. Instead we see disdain, a disdain that extends to hospitals, to health care, to every serious matter in this province on which this government has opened up files — shutting down hospitals without a "by your leave."

Let me tell you briefly what happens in this new megacity in terms of part of the attack this Tory government has made. We had last week a five-year-old boy admitted to emergency at Northwestern hospital. Northwestern has been gutted of its paediatric services; they've taken away obstetrics, they've taken away gynaecology. This five-year-old boy with a tonsillectomy had to be put on a ward for geriatric patients, where there are infections, where it was hazardous. A grievance has been filed to say this isn't right.

That happened here in Toronto a few days ago. It's part of the future this government has in mind for us, unfortunately. We see a government that has in mind for us the fate of a number of women who were waiting to give birth in Humber Memorial Hospital, 10 or 11 of them waiting for six delivery suites because this government wants to close Northwestern General Hospital by November 3, wants to rush and shove. It doesn't matter that they've been told, that the staff has complained. I met with 25 doctors with concerns about what this government is doing in terms of that hospital who way it can't be done safely. They're closing emergencies.

This is the megacity they would have us live in. This is a negacitiy stripped down, stripped of some of its basic elements of civility. It's here, ladies and gentlemen, that the hospitals are being closed. It's out there, in some of the rural and northern areas, that we saw a policy, a policy that they'll find out has political trickery all over it, but at least it slows down some of the closures of those institutions in some of those places. That political trickery at least is some concession that might allow those hospitals to stay open until the next election and until the people there can really tell this government what they think of them trifling with their basics, with their fundamentals, the place they live, the basic right they have to vote, to control at least some of the outcomes that affect them in their everyday lives.

Only this government, with its profound arrogance, could excite from people this kind of response around the things that most people would accept are straightforward, that have to do with sewers and roads and the basic services. People understand now that the megacity bill is the bill that best shows this government's character, or rather this government's lack of character, this government's inability to do what is the most fundamental of political traits: to admit it when you're wrong and to act on that.

This government has not that capacity. It can't do it in terms of hospitals. It sadly has proven here today that it won't do it in respect of Metropolitan Toronto. But it is absolutely certain that the current citizens of the city of Toronto, the city of North York, the city of York, the city of Scarborough and the city of Etobicoke will all remember. They will know that this is a government that doesn't fundamentally respect the people who live here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I just want to thank the member for York South, my colleague, for his very thoughtful and incisive comments. I think he was trying to explain how this bill is connected —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, with apologies to my colleague from Oakwood: I just want to raise a point with regard to the Services Improvement Act, which was introduced by the Minister of Community and Social Services today without any ministerial statement and without any notice on a Thursday afternoon, trying to sneak a bill through prior to the AMO convention this fall.

**1620**

This bill is an omnibus bill. This government has not learned a thing from its experience on Bill 26. This so-called Services Improvement Act would amend 10 different bills. This is the download bill, the download omnibus bill. The government is repeating the same errors it made before. This bill amends the Independent Health Facilities Act, the health protection act, the Ambulance Act, the social housing act, the Toronto Transit authority act, the Day Nurseries Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Building Code Act.

The reason I'm raising this is to ask the Speaker to consider this bill and to determine whether it is in order, because it amends so many unrelated pieces of legislation. It

amends things, as I said, like the Building Code Act, the Social Housing Act and the Toronto Transit Authority Act, while at the same time amending a number of health-related acts and also the Provincial Offences Act.

I submit to you that this a repeat of the mistakes made on Bill 26. This is Bill 26 all over again. The government, now that it has its rule changes through, is demonstrating the same kind of arrogance it has in the past.

I raise this matter with you in a very serious way. I don't want to take away from the time of my friend from Oakwood, but I want to specifically request the Speaker to consider whether the Services Improvement Act, the bill that was introduced today without announcement, without any information to either this House or the media, is in order.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, just to respond to that last point, all the appropriate notice of course was given with regard to this particular bill.

If the argument is that this is an omnibus bill, I would say that omnibus bills have been and are procedurally correct.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Hon David Johnson:** It's a little hard, over the caterwauling from opposite.

**Interjection:** What does "caterwauling" mean?

**Hon David Johnson:** Listen for a minute and you'll find out what caterwauling means.

There are criteria with which omnibus legislation must conform, and this is from page 192, 6th edition of Beauchesne:

"Although there is no specific set of rules or guidelines governing the content of a bill, there should be a theme of relevancy amongst the contents of a bill. They must be relevant to and subject to the umbrella which is raised by the terminology of the long title of the bill."

That's what we have to consider.

There have been many Speakers' rulings and precedents and tradition which all support the practice of using one bill to demand one decision on a number of different, although related — I say again, related — subjects. Speakers in the past have been very clear that they cannot dictate what is in a bill nor can they intervene to divide a bill. No Speaker to date has found in himself or herself the power to split a bill or to rule the contents of a bill out of order.

Speaker Jeanne Sauvé of the House of Commons stated on March 2, 1982: "It may be that the House should accept rules or guidelines as to the form and content of omnibus bills, but in that case the House, and not the Speaker, must make those rules."

It's interesting that the House leader of the third party, a gentleman I respect quite a bit, although we differ considerably on this particular issue — considering that when the third party was in government, from 1990 to 1995, introduced five omnibus bills —

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the House leader address his point to the point of order, please.

**Hon David Johnson:** — five omnibus bills in 1993 to 1994. For example, Bill 143, An Act to amend certain Acts related to The Regional Municipality —

**The Acting Speaker:** Could you address your points to the point of order, please.

**Hon David Johnson:** I'm talking about past rulings and past omnibus bills, in this case the previous government's Bill 143, An Act to amend certain Acts related to the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and to amend the Education Act in respect of French-Language School Boards, 1994.

This bill was inconsistent with conventional omnibus format because it introduced two very different matters that had nothing in common apart from affecting the same geographical area. None the less, in that particular ruling, the Acting Speaker, who is now the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Villeneuve, found the bill to be in order and indicated that the Chair should not dictate to any cabinet member what should or should not be in an omnibus bill. It was in order.

Again, Bill 175, an act to amend the statutes of Ontario, from the previous government, from the NDP government, and on and on it goes. Bill 175 amended 139 statutes, 14 different ministries. Our member for Dufferin-Peel at that point objected to the bill —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Teeny-weeny statutory provisions, not changing the whole scope of what municipalities do.

**Hon David Johnson:** — but that bill was ruled in order and indeed the then Attorney General Marion Boyd, who is with us today —

**Mrs Boyd:** It's not appropriate to comment on who's here and who isn't.

**Hon David Johnson:** Sorry, you're right. I apologize. I'll just say the then Attorney General, in whose name the bill stood, argued that, "The act amends a number of statutes to increase" — you may be interested in this, Mr Speaker — "the efficiency of the government and to improve the services that the government provides to the people of Ontario," which is exactly the intent of this particular bill. Again that was ruled in order. Deputy Speaker Morin ruled again that it was not the responsibility of the Speaker to take upon himself to split the proposed legislation.

Bill 26 has been alluded to here today, and Speaker McLean ruled on December 5, 1995: "Bill 26 may be complex, a very broad piece of legislation. However, omnibus legislation is accepted in parliamentary jurisdictions in this country and it is something to which this assembly is no stranger." There is ruling after ruling in this regard.

This particular bill, the bill that has been raised here today, is introduced by the long title, An Act to improve Services, increase Efficiency and benefit Taxpayers by eliminating Duplication and reallocating Responsibilities between Provincial and Municipal Governments in various areas and to implement other aspects of the Government's "Who Does What" agenda.

This bill clearly meets all the tests of an omnibus bill. The title covers all of the aspects of the bill, it covers all of the ministries. The bill has a theme of relevancy; that theme of relevancy across all aspects of the bill is the realigning of the provincial-municipal relationship, the delivery of more efficient and effective services to the taxpayers. So I would submit to you, Mr Speaker, that indeed this bill is in order.

**Mr Bradley:** It's quite obvious from the fact that the minister is prepared for this argument this afternoon that the government feels guilty about introducing this kind of bill, for a very good reason. The minister makes the point that somehow if he has an all-encompassing title to a bill, all the contents of that bill then are justified. Surely then one could simply dream up a title which would say "Changes to benefit the Province of Ontario," and amend 200 different statutes of the Legislature. The argument that somehow the title entitles this government to put everything together of this kind in one bill is not a valid argument.

**1630**

In addition to that, if you examine the various aspects of this bill in the compendium which was provided to the opposition critics, you would note for certain that these are distinctly different provisions which should be contained in individual bills. Not only has the government changed the rules of the House so it can rush its legislation through much more quickly, but now it's taking 11 different bills into one bill and wanting to shove it through under the new rules of the Legislature. Therefore, I think it is clear that the government is in violation of the rules of this House and that the government is making the same mistake it made when it brought in Bill 26, an all-encompassing bill which blew up in the face of the government some several months ago.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd like to thank the member for St Catharines and the government House leader and particularly Mr Wildman from Algoma for bringing this matter to my attention. Since the bill was just introduced today, I require some time to reflect on that and review it. We do have an excellent research department within the Legislature. I'll therefore reserve my judgement and my ruling and report to the House at my most early convenience.

**Mr Colle:** I think it's very appropriate and almost typical of the way this government operates that this downloading bill is introduced on Thursday afternoon when they had hoped that nobody would be watching. It's essentially another Bill 26. What they're doing with this bill they're introducing as we're about to discuss megacity 2 is the fact that this government still thinks they can get away with doing whatever they feel like doing, and that is why a lot of people are so upset at this government, and this government and its members still don't get it.

The people want to be listened to. You may disagree with people, you may think that people are wrong, but they have a right as taxpayers to be listened to. Even Judge Borins, in discussing the megacity challenge said, a quote in the Globe and Mail:

"The evidence suggested that the measure simply appeared on the government's legislative agenda with little or no public notice and without any attempt to enter into any meaningful consultation with those people who would be most affected by it, the more than two million inhabitants of Metro Toronto. Such, however, is the prerogative of the government."

The government is saying, "We can do it and we're going to do it." That's what they did with megacity Bill 103. That's what they're doing with the son of megacity, 148, which is in essence the same bill. Those of us on this side cannot accept 148 because, in essence, it was brought to this House and to the people of Metropolitan Toronto without their consent; therefore, you cannot say, "Accept these administrative changes" when the bill was brought to the people without any kind of appreciation that the people of Ontario or the people of Metropolitan Toronto would want to have input on it, that they would be listened to.

Here we go talking about why people are most upset about Bill 148, Bill 103, when five minutes ago the interjection by the member for Algoma talked about the repetition of that same pattern by this government, the pattern that even members of your own caucus have stood up bravely against. A few brave members have had the guts to stand up and say: "This is dictatorship. This is not democratic." I don't have to name the members. They're in enough trouble. They have done that because that is why people have fundamentally opposed megacity, 148 and 103, and they oppose the downloading bill that has been introduced today. The people of Ontario expect one small thing: to be listened to in a fair way.

Sure, the government may decide to proceed anyway, but they expect a fair hearing. They expect the government to give and take a little bit and not to do things no matter what people say. That is the misdirection of this whole approach that this government takes not only towards local government but towards everything they do.

This is a government that claims to be neo-conservative, claims to be small government. But my colleague for York South quoted Terence Corcoran, a right-wing financial writer for the Globe and Mail, who said that this government basically believes in big government, believes in government that's interventionist, believes in control. This is a government of control. This is not a small-c conservative government. This is more like a government that comes from the 1930s in the Soviet Union under Stalin, which believes in highly centralized control.

Look at what they've done with the school boards. We had locally controlled school boards. Sure, they weren't perfect, but they were locally controlled. Now in Metropolitan Toronto, for instance, you have a school board of over 300,000 students that's controlled out of Queen's Park. What say will the ordinary taxpayer have in that kind of mega-school board? What say will the student who has a learning disability have in that kind of large school board? This is not small government, when you have entities of 300,000.

What this government has done in a very short period of time is create two of the largest governments in Canada. It has created the megacity, which is going to be the sixth-largest government in Canada, larger than the maritime provinces, larger than Saskatchewan or Manitoba. It's created this government of 2.3 million people, a huge government the size of the province of Alberta. That's not small government; that's in-your-face big government.

Bill 148 reinforces that big-government approach. Bill 148 is about centralizing control, control that they hope will not allow the public to have its give and take.

Look at the other thing they've created: the fifth-largest government in Canada. They now call it a "services board," but we know that is another government. Sure, people say, "You've got to have this." But they won't admit that they have just created again a government of over four million people, which a lot of people are worried about. They're worried about it, not so much because the government may be good or bad, but they say: "Can we have a say in this government? Will you listen to us, whether we live in Oshawa or in East York? Will you listen to us?" That is why they're very apprehensive about bills like Bill 148, Bill 103 and the downloading bill introduced today.

People are very afraid of this government. This is a government that instils fear in the hearts of people of all political stripes. You don't have to be a Liberal or a New Democrat; there are Conservatives who are afraid about this government's big-government attitudes that don't have room for little people, that this is a government that now is going to arbitrarily establish massive governments, massive hospitals, massive school boards all across Ontario.

Maybe, in some cases, a larger government or a larger hospital may be beneficial, but the question is, did the people of that community, the people who donated to that hospital being created with their donation, with their voluntarism, have a say in whether the hospital would be open or closed? Did they have a say in whether city hall or their town hall would be open or closed? This government has not given people a say. It has set up these arbitrary commissions and made decisions.

The hospital restructuring commission: Who has ever seen these people? I saw Mr Sinclair one time in a cameo appearance on TV. He has disappeared, gone back into the bunker somewhere. I wanted Mr Sinclair or whoever — Mr Meyboom, who was appointed to put a megacity into Chatham-Kent. Where are these people? Where do they hide? They should be accountable. It should be MPPs, it should be the city councillors or town councillors, the reeves who are accountable, not these secret agents that this government likes to rely upon.

**1640**

The secrecy and the lack of appreciation of give and take is what makes a lot of small-c conservatives or Liberals or New Democrats very uneasy about this government. And they continue to do this; they never learn. The courts warned the government about its attitude in terms of not listening to people. You had Judge Brennan, about Bill 103, warn this government about what it did in terms of imposing trusteeship on Toronto. You had Judge Borins saying that it's technically legal, what they did with Bill 103, but he couldn't believe the chutzpah of this government actually doing what they did to 2.3 million citizens of Metropolitan Toronto.

This government finds out through its back-room whiz kids what is doable legally. It gets its outside legal firms to do the research to see, "What can we get away with legally?" You heard the House leader saying it again today: "We've done this research. We've gone back to 1982, and these references make what we do legally, technically correct."

But democratic government is not just about what's technically correct and what you can get away with. Democratic government is about imperfection. It's about debate. You might disagree, but at least you get in there and debate; you have that give and take, that listening that takes place. Listening doesn't mean just going through the motions. Listening means you make changes based on what the people want.

With all the people saying day after day after day that they don't want their hospital closed, don't want Women's College Hospital closed, don't want Wellesley closed — we're losing 11 hospitals here in Metro. Who is going to listen? Where is this person, Sinclair, and his back-room people who are making these decisions? How can the public go and explain to them how important their hospital is?

Who do the people go to if they don't like their city being made into a giant city? Who will listen to them? You know what they have to do? They have to go to court. Here's what we've come to. If you've got a problem with your hospital closure, your city being amalgamated, you've got to go to court, because people know now this government is one that doesn't listen.

This government and the Premier, Mike Harris, pride themselves on not listening. They have this attitude: "The protesters were there, they raised all these points. Big deal. We're going to stick to it no matter what." They pride themselves on not making any substantive changes to their agenda. You can get away with it to a certain extent, but I think the chickens are coming home to roost, as they say.

All over Ontario, not just in Metropolitan Toronto, people are beginning to realize that this government doesn't listen not only to Liberals or New Democrats; they also don't listen to their own friends who are small-c conservative. They listen to their big friends with their big tax cut but they don't listen to ordinary people.

If you look at this bill here, 148, you will see that there are massive changes taking place, massive changes which for the most part are not even being done through the auspices of this bill. Actually, most of the changes we're seeing to Metropolitan Toronto right now are being done through an unelected transition team. The minister handpicked six people to create this new government of Metropolitan Toronto, the megacity government. They are going to hire the chief executive officer, they're going to hire the

police chief, the fire chief. They're going to do this. They're appointed.

You can imagine the outrage of people saying: "Hey, wait a minute. Elected councillors have that right, don't they? Why should these appointed people now set up this government and tell us what we've got to do?"

That's who has the power. The real nuts and bolts of this new government in Toronto that they've formed against people's will is being created by this unelected transition team, which is making decisions as we sit here about the future of their city.

You can make deputations, supposedly, before this transition team, but we know that this transition team has been hand-picked by the minister. They're the minister's friends. Who are they going to listen to? The deputants who have a different point of view, or are they going to listen to the minister? They're obviously there to do the minister's bidding. That is what upsets people. There's a budget being set at Metropolitan Toronto right now and they've been told everything's going to be cut by 15%. The budget is being set by the transition team. It's not being set by the elected council. This is going to be the essential program and the program parameters for the new government: unelected people deciding which services, unelected people deciding what's going to be cut, unelected people deciding in which shape this new government is going to develop.

This is what is still being perpetrated under Bill 103, and for the minister to come along and say, "You're now going to accept 148" — the minister knows full well that the people who oppose 103 opposed it because they felt that the public had the right to decide the shape of their own government. The public said that you, as a government at Queen's Park, technically can force this upon us, as Judge Borins said, but you have no right to do it in the way you do in light of the democratic traditions of Ontario and the democratic traditions of our cities and our communities.

That is what Bill 148 is continuing to perpetrate, this attitude that big government here at Queen's Park knows best. They will do what they have to do, they will do it anyway, and they will essentially get away with it because their whiz kid lawyer friends in the back room have said they can get away with it. That is who is running this province, these invisible people who are not accountable. That is what the essence of unaccountability is in 148 and with 103.

If you look at 148, there are some interesting questions raised. The people of Metropolitan Toronto, who are now faced with this new government that they never asked for, are saying: "We thought with this new government there was going to be an equality of service and an equality of taxes. Now we know, with this bill, that there are going to be variable mill rates." It's still possible, despite all the rhetoric, that you're going to have different tax rates for different parts of Metropolitan Toronto. You're going to have different service levels.

One of the reasons people were told to accept this bill is that they said, "We're going to make everything equal." Things aren't going to be equal, because Bill 148 says there are going to be different taxes for different parts of the megacity and different levels of service.

I know in my own community people are saying, "We are going to need a community centre." We don't have, for instance, in the city of York — Mr Speaker, I know there is in your community, but we don't have a community centre in the whole city of York. With 135,000 people, we don't have a full-fledged community centre. We still have 40% of our sewers that aren't separated. They're saying, "With this bill and this megacity coming along, we expect to get community centres, we expect to get our sewers separated and we don't expect to pay the high taxes we're paying right now."

**1650**

But if you look at the technicalities of Bill 148, it tells you that whether it be the city of York or East York or Scarborough, you're still going to have the potential of a disparity in the level of service and you're also going to have different tax rates. It's going to be very interesting for the new mega-councillors to try and explain that to their citizens. "Yes, we've got this new unified megacity but we've still got different tax rates."

People are going to ask: "Why did you do this? We're going to have this new megacity that's united but we're still going to have different services." People are going to say: "Hey, wait a minute. You told us this was all worth it because we're going to have this equality across the six cities." Bill 148 reaffirms that you've still got six, or maybe even more than that because they're talking now about maybe setting up eight or 10 community councils. Who knows how many different levels of service you're going to have? There isn't going to be parity. There isn't going to be equality. There's still going to be a lot of disparity. Then if people in parts of York say, "Hey, we want more money spent for a better community centre," I wonder whether the money's going to be there, because the hook is, if they do get improved services, will their taxes go up? They were told the megacity will not increase taxes, that the megacity will improve services and lower taxes because now you're part of a bigger pie.

Those are some of the interesting questions.

In terms of the fire department, they talk about one fire department. There's a lot of logic to having one fire department, but don't try and sell it to people by saying, "Oh, we're just going to have one chief instead of six chiefs," because we know, according to American experience in Chicago, New York and LA, that what they do is they have one mega-chief and six subchiefs who end up getting paid as much or more than the original six chiefs. Firefighting is done by districts. You can't have it one big blob. You have to split it up. So you're not going to get rid of the six chiefs. You're going to have seven chiefs and the mega-chief is going to have so many more people under him or her that you're probably going to be paying more for that.

Sure, it may make sense to have one fire department, but don't tell us that you're not going to have the six deputy chiefs or subchiefs or vice-chiefs or junior chiefs.

They're going to call them something, but they're still going to be there. The mega-chief will be there and he or she will probably have a big fat salary.

In terms of the other departments, if you look at parks and recreation, the question will be, will there be parity of parks and recreational services throughout this megacity? Will this bill allow that? The answer is no, because it depends on what taxes you're going to be paying in the varying areas, in the old cities. You may not get the same recreational services because you may pay more taxes for those recreational services. So there isn't a formula here for instant equity.

All this bill does is go through consolidating some of the things Bill 103 proposed and some of the things it left out. For instance, in 103 there was no reference basically to the future of the TTC. They sort of left the TTC hanging out there. What they've done with 148 is said that the TTC is going to remain as an independent entity that's going to have its own ability to control transit and have a monopoly on transit in the new megacity. They left that out completely. I think it was probably an accidental omission in 103. They've corrected that mistake in 103 and they've come up with a covering bill, which is Bill 148.

One of the things that's interesting too is that during the 103 hearings, we were told over and over again: "Oh, the hiring of the new civil servants for the megacity will be just temporary. They'll be six-month contracts or they'll be temporary contracts." Yet the transition team appointed by the minister is now advertising across Canada for these top civil servants. Do you think they're telling these civil servants they're going to hire for $150,000 or $200,000 that it's going to be a six-month contract? These people are being told no doubt that they're going to be hired permanently. So whoever agrees or disagrees with these civil servants, the unelected transition team, basically handpicked by the minister and the provincial government, will decide who these top civil servants will be.

We were told in the 103 hearings: "Oh, no, don't worry about that. The new city council will have sway over that. These are temporary things." You can just imagine trying to recruit a top civil servant to be the top CAO of this new city council saying, "Oh, we're just going to hire you for six months." You can rest assured that they'll be stuck with his contract or buyout, or her contract or buyout, and they'll not have much choice in keeping that person on. When they try to get rid of them, you can imagine what they're going to go through.

I think you have been in local government, Mr Speaker. You know the problems of letting go or changing top civil servants, how difficult that is. They just don't want to leave without a big fat severance package. That's what's going to happen because the transition team is hiring these top civil servants. This is something that's not in Bill 148, but is in the extended powers of the minister through his friends on the transition team who are basically organizing this new city to their likeness or to his likeness. That's what's going on. Outside of this bill or any other bill it's just unlimited powers granted to this unelected group that is essentially orgnaizing the future for 2.5 million or 2.3 million people.

No matter where we turn we can see that the essence of change is something a lot of people could accept because we are in a period of change and transition, but over and over again this government keeps rubbing it in people's faces. It keeps telling people: "Yes, we are going to do this. We'll have this token attempt to listen to you, but we're going to do this thing whether you like it or not."

The other thing is that people in this new city are going to look at their tax bill and they're going to say: "We've got a new city. We've got new departments. We've got a new tax system." As you know — I don't know whether in your municipality you're going to get it too — we're getting market value assessment here in Metro. A lot of people are wondering what services they're going to get, what their tax bill is going to be, who's going to set their tax rate, and then they're going to say, "How is this going to be affected by market value assessment?"

The other complication that isn't in this bill which is something that leaves a lot of uncertainty is in terms of who's going to pay what in the different areas of the city. Will the residential taxpayers be asked to pay more than the apartment taxpayers in the mutliresidential or the commercial? That is going to be left up to the next council to decide. They're going to be deciding on who to hit. Are they going to hit the individual homeowner? Are they going to cut his or her services to the homeowners to basically lower the taxes for the apartment tenants, or will they have to hit both the tenants and the homeowners to cut the hit on the commercial taxpayers?

This has all been essentially downloaded upon the people of Metropolitan Toronto. People in Metropolitan Toronto will not know where the cut in service or the increase or the change in taxes comes from. They're going to be totally confused because there are so many things happening at once.

If you go back to the original premise of this bill, the original premise was, "We're going to make some changes and we're going to make things better," but we know why they undertook these changes. This government was hell bent on essentially taking money out of Metropolitan Toronto's rich tax base so they can make up for their tax cut.

That's what the whole rationale of this Bill 103 and Bill 148 was all about. They wanted to get rid of what they felt was a premium school system here in Metropolitan Toronto that had too much money supposedly, to get rid of the money the local governments collected here in Metro so the province could come in and take money for itself. That's what perpetrated this whole mega-madness from day one. What this government was trying to do was essentially camouflage. I've said it before, it was a Trojan Horse for this extraction of money out of Metropolitan Toronto so the schools wouldn't have as much money and the taxpayers and the residents wouldn't have the services at their disposal.

That is what is so upsetting, and the people in Toronto aren't fooled. They know that was the original motive for

doing what they did. I guess the ironic thing in this attempt to extract this money from Metropolitan Toronto is that, to their surprise, they were forced now to dump some of this on to the 905.

**1700**

Now we find the 905 caught up in the downloading dilemma of the Harris government. Originally they thought they could hit Metropolitan Toronto itself and 905 wouldn't have to be touched. The reality has now come home to roost. This downloading exercise, which motivated 103 and 148, is going to come home to roost right across the GTA. All of us will be forced to bear the burden of the downloading, the offloading, of provincial responsibilities. You know what they are, Speaker. We know that social housing is going to be downloaded to the municipalities on their property tax. We know that ambulance services are going to be downloaded. We know that public transit is going to be downloaded. We know that welfare is going to be downloaded.

That has backfired on the Harris government because they thought originally they could just contain it to the 2.3 million people in Toronto. Now I think if you look across the 905 area, which surrounds Toronto's 416 area, people are saying, "Hey, this was supposed to just be a Toronto thing." But they've demonstrated that you cannot get away with just hitting Toronto, because they would have bankrupted Toronto if they had done what they intended to do from four months ago when we told them downloading is going to kill and destroy Toronto. At that time they said: "Oh, no, it's a wash, 10% tax cuts. This downloading won't hurt anybody. Toronto will be fine." We told them $600 million was going to be hit upon Toronto, and they said, "No, no, it's okay," but they've finally come halfway to their senses in realizing Toronto wouldn't have survived that downloading hit. They had to make a big retreat on that.

The tragedy, though, is that the downloading concept still remains, so even though the pain is now spread throughout the 905, throughout the GTA, the basic principle which these bills reinforce of offloading income maintenance programs on to property taxes is what is fundamentally flawed and what is most dangerous about this approach.

If the provincial government had forgone a portion of its tax cut to the rich, who benefit most, they could have softened the downloading. But they had to do the downloading in order to get away with that giveaway in the tax cut. That's why they had to do the downloading, because they couldn't have social housing on their books, they couldn't have welfare on their books or public transit on their books, or they wouldn't have therefore looked good in the eyes of the public in terms of managing their financial budgetary picture.

The only way out for this government, and we're going to be caught in it, and I think the rest of the province is going to be caught in it — I've stuck to the 905, the GTA area, on this bill, but the whole province subsequently — is proof that they're going to be caught in the same exercise of the shell game of the tax cut, where what were provincial responsibilities are now local responsibilities. That is the unbelievable challenge that the people of Metropolitan Toronto are faced with. They're going to have to somehow juggle —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd):** Could I ask the member for Scarborough East to please either take his seat or take his conversation outside the chamber. I'm having a hard time hearing the member for Oakwood.

**Mr Colle:** The member for Scarborough East doesn't like to listen. I know he likes to talk a lot, but that is maybe symptomatic of why things have gone wrong with this bill.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Say something original and maybe we will.

**Mr Colle:** This is where the problem is. The member for Scarborough East is typical of this authoritarian, autocratic approach to governance, where they're always right and "We will not pay attention to you." But I know the people out there are starting to pay attention to this government. They realize now what this government is all about. They're a government that is hell-bent on doing what they feel will please a very small segment of society and they're a government hell-bent on trying to spend more time on damage control than on actually trying to help people.

If you look at this change that's taking place to Metropolitan Toronto, if you take a look at all these massive changes that nobody asked for — what was the emergency? Why the emergency? All over the world people have been saying for the last 20 years: "You have one of the best, livable, clean, safe, open, friendly cities in the world to live in that's got prosperity, that's got good health care, good communities. Why would you all of a sudden turn everything up on its ear?" This is what people have been asking and you wonder whether this government ever lived in a city, that they would want to destroy it and turn it upside down and risk so much.

This reckless approach, this approach that they know best, that they don't have to listen, that they could only do what they want if they listen to a few select friends, basically goes in the face of the reality of Metropolitan Toronto and its six communities where, despite their challenges with all the newcomers who come here, despite their challenges of the elderly, the poor, they have done a fantastic job, considering the challenges Metropolitan Toronto has faced over the last number of years.

They've done a great job, and sure there have been problems. Nobody will deny that taxes are sometimes too high. Nobody will deny that services are not what you want at times. Nobody will deny there's sometimes too much traffic. But overall the people of Etobicoke and the people of North York and the people of East York have been quite content to live in this metropolitan area. They never asked for a bulldozing of their way of life. They never asked for a closing of 11 hospitals. They never asked for a totally different approach to government financing which puts more emphasis on the property tax-

payer and less on the income tax. They never asked for these dramatic, draconian changes.

This level of change, as I said, only goes back to Stalinist Russia, when they did this kind of dramatic change. There has been no Conservative or Liberal or New Democratic government in Ontario that has done such massive change to a province. They've never done it. You ask the people, "Is the change for good?" and you'll see there are a lot of victims of this bulldozing who sometimes don't get heard and sometimes are not high profile.

There are a lot of seniors who are very worried about their hospital, their local services. There are a lot of poor, some on welfare, some working poor, who wonder where their next piece of bread is going to come from. They worry about these things. I know the members over there don't listen or hear these people, but they come to my office on a daily basis. They come and cry because they have no place to live because all the social housing has been shut down. You have grown men, 65 years of age, crying because they're on the streets and they're too ashamed to tell their family. That is what this upheaval is doing.

People don't know what they're going to change next. Every time they pick up the paper this government is undergoing more change, more upheaval, more turning upside down of our province, of our cities. People say: "Would you get out of my face for a minute and let me breathe? We didn't elect you to shove all these things down our throats. We elected you to govern. We didn't elect you to rule or to transform this into some kind of gulag or whatever they're trying to do here." They want change but they don't want it rammed down their throats. They want to be listened to. They want meaningful input where they can also have a bit of say in shaping their city, their hospitals, their housing. But right now the majority of people feel it's just one massive bulldozing after another.

They say, "These guys can't even stop for the summer. They've got to come back," and today we've been here three or four days and they introduce this downloading omnibus bill. We went through Bill 26. They put the province through hell with 26, which they said was just a small series of bills.

**1710**

We have a repeat of this again today. This government and the leaders of this government do not learn. They keep on trying to do things as they did with Bills 26 and 103. They will not change because they feel they're getting away with it.

I don't think all these changes are going to be opposed, but what's happening now is that people are saying, "Enough is enough, I don't trust whatever this government is doing." It seems to have a plan that is foreign to what ordinary people perceive as being reasonable. They're being extremist. This is extreme upheaval: closing 11 hospitals, mega-school boards, megacities, all at once.

You can imagine if they did one of those things, like the housing alone, the impact that has on people. Rent control: There are people all over Metropolitan Toronto worried about that and the impact on their neighbourhoods and city, because one of the things that has made this city a wonderful place to live is that no matter where you go in Etobicoke or Toronto or North York, you'll find some very affordable housing right in very well-to-do areas. You've had a good mix. In the downtown core, in north Toronto, wherever you go, there are very good affordable apartments.

What has happened in the middle of all these changes of downloading with megacity is that this government is all of a sudden taking people, literally, and saying, "Hey, we may have to move you out of the apartment you've lived in for 20 years." That's the threat they're putting over people because they're changing the way people live through the rent control decontrol.

How are people going to feel comfortable with all these changes? It's very difficult, especially if you tell the seniors. They're the ones most concerned. Seniors are most concerned about these bills because bill after bill seems to be an attack on their stability and comfort. Sure, seniors will say, "I need some improvements," but they're really wondering what is going to happen tomorrow or a month from now.

All these changes and proposals we see in Bill 148, if you look at them, seem pretty innocuous. But in terms of how they affect people, there are going to be some very dramatic changes. It's going to take a lot of work, good fortune and dedication to make sure that somehow the 2.3 million people in Metropolitan Toronto survive this.

The ironic part of it is, if you look back a year or two ago, things weren't that bad. The best judges of that were people who visited Toronto who would tell you over and over again: "Your city is a city that should be copied. Your city is one that works. Your city is one that I would want to move to." These were the comments made by professional city planners; they were made by tourists; they were made by family members who visited from other countries. They would continually talk about Toronto being a city they would want to move to, a city they would like to copy.

Sure, in 1989 the recession hit and we had a very difficult five or six years. To say, "Well, we had to turn the whole place upside down because of the recession," is not right or fair, because that was something that was out of everybody's control, no matter what level of government. The recession was something basically that, as you know, everybody had to live with and could do very little about.

To use that as the excuse to bulldoze everything is not acceptable, because this city has worked, it has provided employment for people from all over the world, it has provided culture for people from all over the world, it has provided housing for people from all over the world. And people from all over Ontario, people from all over Canada have come to Toronto, have been welcome here. That has been Toronto's success; that has been Etobicoke's success; it has been the success of all six municipalities. That is what makes them such valuable places. They're valuable because the people make them valuable. Governments don't make them valuable.

This is a government that believes it can make things valuable or make them optimally, let's say, financially viable — they think they can do that by legislation all the time. They think they can pass bills and make things wonderful. It's not governments and it's not bills that make cities wonderful; it's not backroom whiz kids, it's not high-priced lawyers who make cities wonderful; it's the people who live in neighbourhoods, who contribute by volunteering, who volunteer at the local school, who participate and support their local stores, who attend local concerts, who make sure their parks are clean. These are the people who have made Toronto successful. These are the people who have felt ignored.

This government through its Bills 103 and 148 is a government that has basically told those people, who especially 10 or 20 years ago, when a lot of us had the decision to make, "Do we stay in Metropolitan Toronto or do we leave?" — these are the people who stayed in their neighbourhoods. They stayed in the Annex. They stayed in Cabbagetown. They stayed in Swansea. They stayed in my Oakwood area. They said: "We're going to stay here and make things work. We're not going to leave. We're not going to escape. We're not going to go to find some Nirvana out in Bobcaygeon or somewhere." They said, "We're going to stay here, roll up our sleeves, make sure our schools work, make sure our parks are clean and make our community better." Those are the people who built this city.

If you look in my own area, and I ask you to go through it, there were all kinds of run-down houses 10 or 15 years ago; they were dilapidated. Without any government help, individuals have built new houses out of the old houses with bricks. There are beautiful new homes standing where old run-down ones were. They bought those houses, they put up their own money, in many cases they built these houses themselves on the weekends. They're popping up all over these streets where at one time there were a lot of run-down houses.

They've done that in downtown Toronto, down on College Street. They've done it in the west end. They've done it in Cabbagetown, where people said, "Hey, listen, we're going to stay here, and we're going to build and rebuild, renovate, improve our homes." They all did that. They did it without the government. That's what made downtown Toronto, that's what made the Beach in the east end viable. People stayed, put their own money, their own love into their homes and neighbourhoods. It wasn't the government that did it; they did it.

These are the same people who say, "Now you come along and say Bill 148 is going to make it perfect, and you're going to do it whether we like it or not." They say: "Wait a minute. We are adults. We're taxpayers. We have the right to vote. You can't do these things without consulting." But this government, as you know, concocted all this stuff in some back room. We still don't know which back room, but we know this was thrust upon us. All these plans, or all these schemes, I should say, were concocted where I don't know, but they were concocted, and basically they've turned a province, a city upside down.

The question is, to what end have they done all this? To what end are they closing hospitals? To what end are they shutting down city halls? To what end are they shutting down schools? To what end? What is their ultimate goal? Where are they going? Are they just saying that closing these places down is an end in itself? I'm beginning to think that's what it's all about, that there is no vision. The essence of what they're about, these backroom people who are manipulating this government is they seem to have one goal, and that is basically to make things larger, more distant, and to ensure that small groups of people or individuals don't have any say in it.

That's what they seem to relish. That is what, I'm sad to say, seems still to be the direction of this government. No matter how many times they get rapped on the knuckles by courts and by the electorate, by ordinary citizens, they still continue on their merry old way of doing what they want to do, not what people are asking them to do.

**1720**

People asked for some change, moderate change. They didn't ask for this revolution. They didn't ask for their homes, their hospitals, their schools to be bulldozed. That is what is happening in everything they seem to be doing. People are saying: "Give us time to catch our breath. Give us time so we can maybe shape this thing ourselves." That's what they're asking.

But this government doesn't seem to have any desire to slow down. As you know, they've changed the rules here in this House. This is the last day we will be able to debate in a meaningful way. As of midnight tonight, our ability to inform people about what's in these bills and our ability to debate is going to be curtailed dramatically.

They're going to go even faster. Their going 100 miles an hour isn't fast enough; they're going to go 200 miles an hour. That is what they're all about. They don't want to slow down to listen to people. They now want to ensure there is even less debate, less questioning, less opinion by the electorate. That is what is very scary about Bill 148 and what it means to Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I want to congratulate the member for Oakwood on a very passionate speech in defence of the way of life that his constituents enjoy, and more importantly, about the manner in which this government has moved. It's clear this government is not listening. You only listen to your friends. We only need to look at the limited amount of time that's being given in this House with the new rules, but also out in committee where we travelled around the province. The whole opportunity traditionally has been given through committee hearings to allow people to have their say.

You just did that with the WCB, limiting it to six days. With Bill 7, when you changed the Ontario Labour Relations Act, you didn't even have one minute of public hearings. You just rammed things through.

You've got so many changes going on, it's no wonder that the people of Toronto and the surrounding areas are concerned. There is hardly a facet of this province left that

you haven't tipped upside-down. Some of you will feel really good about that and say: "See? We're fixing it." Well, no. The point is that you're not listening to people. You are changing it, but you're not necessarily making it better. You cannot have thought through all the implications of what you're doing. We've seen that often enough. We see it in the number of amendments that have to be made. When finally people do get a chance to speak, we hear about what the implications are.

But you haven't thought of those things. How many times have you had to change direction? In my own community of Hamilton-Wentworth, in terms of governmental restructuring, you flip-flopped all over the place. Every time you announced, "Oh, we've got the solution," it was only to find out that somebody said, "Have you thought of this, and this and this?" Then you went back and scratched your heads and said, "We've got a new idea." At the end of the day, you ended up doing nothing. You missed the one opportunity we had to properly restructure things.

In closing, I again compliment my colleague in the Liberal Party, the member for Oakwood, on an excellent speech that I think is very relevant.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I appreciate the opportunity to say something briefly in response to the member for Oakwood, who once again made a passionate but completely bereft of substance comment about another bill.

The bottom line is that the rhetoric has reached proportions that are absolutely astronomical. A member opposite who would suggest that we are ramming through bills, that we're not listening, that we're not consulting with people, is flying in the face of the facts. Last year we passed only 10 bills. The NDP in 1994 passed 31 bills. But in 1989, your government passed 93 bills.

You want to talk about consultation. Last year, our government held 720 hours of committee hearings. The NDP's maximum, in 1994, was 689 hours. Your government never consulted more than 529 hours in a year, 200 hours less. And you dare to stand there and say we're not listening to the people, knowing full well that the bill that's before another committee in this House has just seen 100 amendments introduced by the government based purely and simply on the consultations we made with people all across this province on how we can make the landlord and tenant relationship even better.

That's what we've done. That's the reality in this province. For this member opposite to stand before us as someone who first got into politics calling for the amalgamation of the cities of Toronto and now is the chief spokesman against it, and who stands here today saying that his bill will not make Toronto work better at the same as he is the co-manager of Mel Lastman's election campaign, is the height of duplicity. It is obviously going to work, or you wouldn't be part of that campaign, sir, I submit. Either that or there's a word that starts with "h" that we're not allowed to use in this chamber.

The bottom line is that this bill provides the technical mechanisms to make sure that the framework we brought forward in Bill 103 is now translated into an effective, efficient, productive municipality that will make Toronto even better. The greatest city in the world will become greater yet.

**Mr Gerretsen:** We'll let the people of Ontario judge for themselves the arrogance of this government, because we certainly can in this House on almost a daily basis.

You know what's very interesting? The member for Oakwood talked about the rule changes that go into effect as of midnight tonight. I think this is very relevant, and it's something the people of Ontario should take note of and should really do something about. They should talk to their government members about this.

Let me give you an example of how the new rule changes are going to change the way in which business is done in this House. In this House an omnibus bill — which was just introduced, by the way, without any discussion from a cabinet minister at all. This is a bill that deals with the Ambulance Act, with the building code, with the Day Nurseries Act, with health protection, with Toronto Transit Commission, with social housing funding. That's all going to be dealt with, and people will have an opportunity to speak, after the first seven hours of debate, for about 10 minutes on a major piece of legislation like this. That just is not acceptable.

First of all, of course this kind of legislation shouldn't be allowed to be introduced, which deals with about 10 different acts at the same time in a very substantive way. These are not minor, little amendments. These are major amendments in terms of who is going to pay for what. Of course we know that basically the municipalities are going to pay for all the different items mentioned in this bill.

But for the government to come in here, introduce this piece of legislation without a comment from the minister who introduces it, and then expect the members of the opposition to talk about this, after the first seven hours of debate, for 10 minutes per member is shameful. It shows the arrogance of this government and it shows the kind of attitude that this government has shown over the last two years.

I hope the people of Ontario will get upset about this. This bill that has just been introduced today is almost as bad as Bill 26. I'm sure the people of Ontario thought it couldn't get any worse, but it just did.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I too am pleased to comment on the remarks of the member for Oakwood. I believe he has set out the concerns of a number of people in his constituency and I would say in my constituency, being part of Metropolitan Toronto, at the way in which change is being forced through by this government and the speed of change. I think the megacity legislation was an example of that. The bill before us now is the transition bill that comes under that, dealing with a lot of the details of how you transfer from multiple municipalities to a single municipality.

The tone and the content of the member for Oakwood's delivery I think touches a real chord in how people feel about this, that all of this has happened so quickly, was so overwhelming. While the member for Scarborough East can cite in a very arrogant and pious way the number of people who were heard, there were thousands of people

who didn't get heard and thousands and thousands who voted no, as you know, in a referendum, whose voices were never heard, because while the democratic will was expressed — no to megacity — the government proceeded.

I understand why the member for Oakwood chose to focus his remarks on the speed, the haste and the mistakes therefore that the government has made, the unintended consequences that we're going to be dealing with for a long time, not just in this area but in a number of areas, and the fact that the government just isn't listening. They've stopped listening to the people who are the electorate of the province. They say they have a plan, they say they have a mandate and they're going to proceed, but people out there want to have an influence on that, and the government has stopped listening. That is sad, because you have the right to govern but it is only a right with responsibility. Your responsibility is to listen, and you're not doing that.

**1730**

**The Acting Speaker:** Response from the member for Oakwood.

**Mr Colle:** I want to thank my colleagues from Hamilton-Centre, Scarborough East — although I disagree with his comments, he has the right to say them — and certainly my colleague from Kingston and The Islands and my colleague from the city of Toronto and the Beaches for her comments.

In terms of what this bill means by itself, I think for the ordinary citizen they're not quite sure. But what the ordinary citizen is saying and what I've said is that this government will do whatever it can get away with. You couldn't have more proof of that than what has happened here today in this House. The government has introduced this downloading bill without any kind of notice, this downloading omnibus bill, and at the same time at midnight tonight they are going to dramatically change the rules of this House so that the opposition will not be able to let the public know what's going on in this House. That's basically what they've done.

For members of the Conservative Party to stand up and say, "We're listening and we had all these hours," I say the proof is in what you're doing today. That is where the proof is. You're going to change the rules to have things more your own way, to ram bills through at twice the speed you've been doing already, with even less consultation. That is what has been wrong with the whole megacity thing, because they just don't get it.

People would accept change. What the people of Toronto will never accept is being told what to do and ordered what to do. The people of Toronto will survive this government and these bills. We will make sure we survive them because we have so many good people here in this city. No matter what damage the government has done, I have faith that we'll be able to undo the damage when they get rid of them.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Madam Chair: I am about to take the floor and be recognized by you to speak to this Bill 148. I suspect that at that point in time the clock will show 90 minutes as the time I have available, being the first speaker from my caucus. As you know, the government has rammed through rule changes which will indicate that as of Monday, the leadoff speeches will only be 60 minutes.

Madam Chair, it is my contention, and I believe this is supportable, given that I will be commencing a speech today which will have 90 minutes on the clock, that when we return to this bill I should have whatever time remaining on the clock at 6 of the clock tonight to continue, and that the time would not be changed in accordance with the new rules. I seek your clarification on that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, the Clerk's office obviously has been busy looking at the transition from one set of rules to another and were aware, given the circumstances of this afternoon, that this issue would likely be raised. They have consulted and have provided me with the following advice:

"The commencement clause contained in the motion to amend the standing orders, passed yesterday, provides that the amended standing orders shall apply to all proceedings in the House and the committees, including those commenced before the coming into force of the amended standing orders. As a result, the next time the order is called for resuming the adjourned debate on this bill, members' speeches will be governed by the revised time limits, despite the fact that this proceeding, second reading debate, commenced before those revisions took effect. It is my view that speeches already commenced within an adjourned proceeding are to be honoured in the amount of time originally allowed to each speaker at the outset of these speeches. Since, in addition to this debate, there are currently only four other adjourned debates on the order paper with outstanding time remaining, I believe this approach will assist the House in the transition to the new standing orders in a fair manner and without complications in this regard."

Member for Beaches-Woodbine, further debate?

**Ms Lankin:** Yes, continuing debate. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank the clerks. I am sure they are very busy scurrying through looking at a lot of issues with respect to these new rules that have been rammed through, and I appreciate your ruling with respect to that.

We are today debating Bill 148. This bill is called An Act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new City of Toronto. The new city of Toronto, of course, is the megacity. We've had that debate; that bill has passed. I mourn that fact significantly, but obviously with that legislation in place a certain number of transition measures must be addressed in a subsequent piece of legislation, and that's what we have before us today.

You've heard many other members speak about the way in which this government is moving, though, at breakneck speed and the unfortunate unintended consequences that happen when governments do that. I want to give the public a sense of the breadth of this bill, because by its title it doesn't really explain much to you. It's an act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new city. Where is the city hall going to be? There are

some things like that which you might think are relatively minor, but think of the fact that you have a number of municipalities being amalgamated: their city councils being done away with, their planning boards being done away with, their library boards being done away with, their public health boards being done away with, their fire departments — I could go on and on. Obviously there is a lot of complexity to this.

I say to the member for Scarborough East, you can read your papers and you can chirp in all you want. I'm attempting to address in a very serious manner the fact that there is complexity to a transition from a number of municipalities to one, particularly the size of the new megacity, the new city of Toronto. In that complexity, I suggest to you that if you don't take the time to listen to people with respect to the details contained in this bill, you will find yourselves making some mistakes. Governments do need to have the check of the people out there who are involved in the delivery of services or in the operation of certain aspects that are contained within any bill to know whether or not they got it right. Because it doesn't matter the political stripe of the government; you rely very heavily on the work that is done within the ministries that is provided to you, and very good people who do that work, but mistakes do happen.

The unintended consequences of certain actions require a system in which there is debate, in which there is exposure, in which there is an understanding in depth of what is being proposed in terms of changes and there is a mechanism, obviously, through amendments to correct that before it's implemented.

If you don't give the process a sufficient time and effort, and if you don't clearly listen to people, which I would say the government has gotten into a bit of a habit of — perhaps I can understand in terms of psychology. If you're criticized so much all the time, you start not to listen. But it is dangerous, particularly when you're dealing with a bill of such technical complexity.

I want to give people a sense and understanding of how broad this bill is in terms of the issues that are being dealt with. I'm just going to go through the contents in part I of the bill. It deals with definitions. That's pretty normal. Up front in a bill it sets out the definitions of some of the terms you would find contained in the bill. Then it talks about delegation of powers that the council has. Then there's a whole section that has 10 different parts to it, quite lengthy and complex, that deals with pensions and benefits. So here's the first area.

Think about amalgamating a number of municipalities. There are employees of those municipalities, people who have salaries, who have benefit plans in terms of their long-term life insurance or their supplementary health insurance or dental benefit plans or whatever, and who have pensions. In some cases there are some similarities in municipalities. In pensions, for example, most of them belong to the Ontario municipal employees, OMERS, retirement plan. With respect to benefits, however, there are a lot of differences. So these employees all have to be merged together.

We know we'll be dealing next week with Bill 136 about how the government is going to bring down its heavy hammer on the heads of workers in order to force this amalgamation of their contracts and give outside people who have no background or experience in labour relations and dispute resolution in the public sector the ability to cherry-pick among contracts and to impose certain conditions and to take away long-and-hard-fought-for and hard-won improvements in working conditions or things like job security. We'll be debating that next week.

**1740**

You can see that under the pensions and benefits area, we have to talk about how the plans that exist now are continued; how they can be amended in terms of who has the power to amend the bylaws of these pensions once they are amalgamated; the local boards, who now becomes the board of the pension and how the local boards relate to the central board; the pension contributions, the rates of that; the corporate status of the plan and the fund; the right to transfer between plans; the right to elect, how you preserve that right to elect options within the plans; plans other than OMERS, because there are some municipal employees — a smaller number when you look province-wide, but here in Metro, there are some who are in plans that are different from OMERS, separate pension plans; the contribution to pensions of craft tradespersons, because craft councils have their own different setup. There's the Toronto fire department's superannuation and benefit fund, which is separate from OMERS, the supplementary pensions, council members' pensions. It's a whole section on this, very complex.

If you are an elected member or an employee of a city in the current municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, soon to be the new megacity City of Toronto, you need to know what's in this bill in terms of how it affects the pensions, your pension plan and your benefit plan, how it will be amalgamated, what rights you will retain and what rights you may be losing. You need to know about this. You need to have time to understand it, to perhaps get some advice, and if you have a concern, to be able to come forward to the government, to the committee, and to make representation on that.

Part II of the bill deals with water and sewage works. It has five or six sections to it and it deals with existing agreements of sewage and land drainage and how those are continued or not continued or amended in the future. It deals with contract supply of water to other municipalities, where one municipality has a water source and sells its services to another municipality. It deals with allowing municipalities to set the rates, the fees, to allow people to discharge into the sewage system, and how that will vary when you have councils that have very different approaches based on whether or not they were a council that was less environmentally concerned and more development concerned. There are very significant differentials that could have been in place with respect to those rates. It deals with how that gets merged.

Where do the people have an opportunity to have input into that, to suggest that perhaps that shouldn't be, in a

transition period, the responsibility of a new council? Maybe the differentials should be maintained or an environmental best practice be maintained, that in other municipalities the council only has the ability in the amalgamation to bring the other bylaws or the other rate charges up to the environmental best practice.

I suppose in debate of this bill we could have that discussion, so I say to you, if you are an environmentalist, if you are a person concerned about development and accessibility of water and sewage treatment and how that is going to be paid for, how we're going to charge an environmental levy for discharge into the system, then you should be concerned about this bill. You should get this bill, understand what those implications are, understand what powers the new council will or won't have, and you should make representation to this committee if you feel this needs to be amended.

Part III deals with highways, controlled access roads, allowing the new megacity to designate roads that are controlled access. It allows them now to set the bylaws with respect to street vending. That's an interesting one, because communities and neighbourhoods have very different standards with respect to that. I know, living in the Beaches, an area that attracts a lot of people into our community, we don't have a lot of street vending, because we have a very well-developed boutique shopping, specialty shopping business sector that has over the years sought to improve itself to serve the tourist who comes into this very special area of our city. However, if you think about downtown waterfront areas near the SkyDome, for example, near Ontario Place, a number of areas down there, you will see that there are many more street vendors, because there is a large volume of people walking back and forth and not as much in terms of restaurant or storefront operations. So different neighbourhoods have developed different approaches to this.

You might say, "Okay, that won't change," but let me suggest to you that it's not just different neighbourhoods. Different cities have different approaches. The borough of East York is an area that is quite different — although I actually live just blocks from the boundary between the city of Toronto and the borough of East York, it is very different, significantly different from the area in which I live with respect to issues like the use of street vendors. The new megacity is going to make those bylaws. Well, what about the approach that already existed in that neighbourhood? Is there a way to preserve that? If you are concerned about that, you should be reading this and making presentations with respect to this so that you understand how this bill is going to affect your own community.

Part IV is transportation. This is where there are definitions of the TTC. Well, isn't this interesting? Think about this. The TTC was already Metro, right? It's not changing in terms of who has jurisdiction. Within a week or so we're going to be talking about the omnibus legislation that was tabled today in this House with respect to the government's downloading and what that means in terms of a change in the operation of TTC and GO Transit and all of that, but the megacity legislation per se didn't change the operation of the Toronto Transit Commission.

However, in the transition there are some things that are quite technical and that nobody would have an objection to, like redefining the board. The board is now sort of the board of the city of Toronto transit commission rather than the Metropolitan Toronto transit commission. There are some things like that that are pretty straightforward.

But it does deal with the issues of assets and liabilities of the TTC, of the pension fund society, of the sick benefit plan; with general functions of the TTC; with city contributions, capital and operating costs, which is a big one in terms of that relationship. As I said, that will be affected also by the downloading legislation, but that's separate.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Lankin:** I'm not sure why the minister is chirping away here. All I'm doing is explaining what's in the bill.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Lankin:** And there goes the member for Scarborough East again. Go back to your papers or contribute something meaningful.

The Toronto Islands ferry, bus services, street railway company, all of that.

If you are an employee of the TTC, as I said earlier, or if you are an employee of a municipality or whatever, you may want to understand whether any of the changes under the pensions and benefits will affect you. If you're an employee of a municipality, there likely will be changes; the TTC perhaps not, because they have been separate in the past. But this is an area that you will want to examine just to understand how the bill affects you, and you'll want to come forward if you think there are concerns and make presentations.

Let me go on. Part V, police, is a very short section. It actually deals with the composition of the board. I think there is a technical provision in there where it says there is some deeming to go on here. It deems that the polices services board has made application under the Police Services Act for a change in composition of the board, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council is deemed to have approved it. It doesn't explain exactly what that means. I suspect it's to allow the new council to set up their own police services board and its composition and perhaps the number, and to leave the power with the new council. It's not very clear in the legislation that this would be the effect. That's something on which I hope at some point we might have an opportunity for questions and answers, to get a response on whether that is in fact what that section means.

**1750**

Part VI, Land use planning: This one I actually like. This is very important. It continues existing official plans, so the official plans for the city of Toronto, the city of Etobicoke, Scarborough etc continue until such time as they are amended by the new megacity council. That's important, because again the various cities have taken very different approaches to land use. I am going to be fascinated to watch how we will bring about some symmetry to this — not symmetry. In fact, I want the exact

opposite. I want the eventual official plan to recognize the differences in approaches, because the downtown inner core is very different from how some of Scarborough has developed or how North York has developed.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I expect the council will soon figure that out.

**Ms Lankin:** Again, the member for Scarborough East chirps away. Do you not think it's important to allow people out there to know what's in the bill? Your minister hasn't gone through it. This is the first opportunity for people to understand.

**Mr Gilchrist:** It's on the Internet.

**Ms Lankin:** He says it's on the Internet. Do you know what? There are some constituents in my riding who don't have access to the Internet. And do you know what? They watch the legislative channel to hear MPPs debate bills and to talk about what's in a bill. You just spent 10 minutes talking about someone and complaining that they weren't talking about the bill. You were chirping away for 10 minutes, and chirping is what you do regularly in this House. I'm talking about what's in the bill, so maybe you could sit there, go back to your business and just allow us to go on and have a discussion here.

Let me go on in terms of what else is in this bill. The health and welfare section —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Scarborough East, the member for Beaches-Woodbine has the floor.

**Ms Lankin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Part VII of the bill, health and welfare: This is with respect to boards of health and it has a lot to do with dissolution of existing boards, the creation of new boards and a change in the way in which public health is administered. It deals with how those boards have governance over things like public hospitals, their relationship with that; homes for the aged, grants to homes for the aged for elder care; vesting and distribution of trust funds with respect to these homes; payments re the county of York home — this is a particular agreement that's in place where the county of York, which is outside the new megacity, the Metro area, but has residents from this area — there is a reciprocal or a payment agreement, so it talks about that; special welfare assistance; a number of things such as the Regent Park South nursery school. There are some anomalies under health and welfare that have to be continued or dealt with here.

One of the things I think we need to be very concerned about is later on in the bill there's a section dealing with members of municipal bodies. In that section we have the power to dissolve a number of existing municipal bodies. I'm just trying to find the reference to that section. Let me give you an example: the library boards, the historical boards, various planning bodies, and boards of health, as I mentioned.

I'm concerned about boards of health. We've had much debate in this House around things like Wellesley Hospital and the importance of having an urban health care plan and understanding the very different needs, urban health care needs, when you have high-density and in particular low-income areas, the impact of that on people's health, the particular kinds of treatments that are needed, particularly the kinds of resources that are needed. A number of years ago I was chair of the eastern health area of the Toronto board of health. The old city of Toronto had divided the city up into a number of regions and had local community people involved on area health boards which then the chair of fed into being part of the overall board of health, and there were reports back and forth. It was a very effective way to ensure that neighbourhoods were being addressed.

Not all boards of health within Metropolitan Toronto, the municipalities, operate on that basis. But not all of them have the same kind of high-density, low-income, inner-city urban needs that the city of Toronto board of health did. There are some other areas — I'm not disputing that — in the Metropolitan Toronto area, but the thing is that they've developed very different ways, and I'm proud of the work that the board of health of the city of Toronto has done.

I'm also proud of some of the incredible work that has been done in the borough of East York. For example, their medical officer of health and the public health unit there have embarked upon a heart healthy campaign. It's a huge campaign. It's designed to reach out to the people who live in that area in a very effective way. One of the reasons for that is the extraordinarily high population of senior citizens who live in that area. Their programs have been designed to meet the local health needs of the people. It's based on population health needs.

What happens to that kind of sensitivity to the local issues with an amalgamation? Why does the government feel it is necessary to dissolve public health boards and to amalgamate them? Why couldn't we, like we had the community councils, after a great furore in the megacity debate, a long furore — not a long debate, a long furore — in these chambers, the government finally moved an amendment to their bill to create community councils based on the boundaries of the old municipalities. They said this was their attempt to deal with the concerns that had been raised about the local constituency concerns and the culture and differences in the different cities. I think it doesn't replace local governance in the way we had it at all, but it was an attempt on the part of government to deal with that concern.

I think actually local health boards should have been treated similarly. Why could they not have been left under the purview of the councils? Why could they not have had some sense of the delivery programs that have been developed, which are very specific from region to region, municipality to municipality within Metro? Why could those not have been left in place?

This bill essentially says they won't be. If you're concerned about the delivery of public health in your municipality as it stands now, if you think there perhaps need to be some changes to how the government has proposed to dissolve those boards, then you'll want to get a copy of this. You'll want to read it and understand the implications. You'll want to have some time to talk to people in

the public health field to see if they think they can work through this, if it can be accomplished in a way different than having to dissolve the boards, or even with the boards dissolved, can we still fund regional offices, is there a way to accomplish the goal without changing the government's proposal? Those sorts of things you'll want to have time to do and come forward and to make presentations before the committee. I don't know all the answers to that yet. I have some significant concerns in that area.

Part VIII deals with parks and recreation, bylaws around the sale of liquor in certain parks. Let me tell you, I've got one of them, a city park down along the waterfront. This is in the Beaches area. There is sale of liquor there. There's a boardwalk café some of you may know. There's a very nice restaurant. Let me pitch for that part of the city. There are also some outlets, vending — there's only one person who has a contract or whatever to vend in that whole park and a long interesting story as to how that came about. But this section deals with that.

I know that has been an issue of huge debate within my community and with other communities about whether or not there should be any commercial sales within a public park, a city park. If you've got concerns about that or you think that issue should be addressed or not continued or the provincial government should set some uniform standards on this, you'll want to come and make representation under this section of the act.

There are a few different things here that are, again, very technical and understandable, such as the agreement with the Guild Inn — people may not know that Metro has a relationship in terms of the ownership of the Guild Inn — and Exhibition Place, a relationship there. Although it is interesting, this does continue the board but it also talks about former employees of the association of the Exhibition Stadium Corp. If you're a former employee, you may want to address that.

The Chair is indicating to me that it's almost 6 of the clock. I want to indicate that I've got to part VIII, this is just from the index, in detailing the sorts of things that this bill deals with. There are 18 sections. I'll have plenty of time when we resume debate on this to go through the rest of it.

The bottom line that I want to stress, just in closing this debate for today, is that this bill is likely, given indications we've had from the government House leader, to be forced through quick reading and time allocation over the next week and then out to committee within a week or two. If any of the areas that I've touched on so far are areas that are of concern to you, that you want to have input into, you need the bill now, you need to get your name in to come to committee, you need the time to be able to reflect and understand what changes or concerns you have and bring that forth to us here so that debate can take place in committee.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I have the weekly business statement.

Pursuant to standing 55, I wish to indicate the business for the week of August 25, 1997.

On Monday, August 25, during the afternoon sitting, the House will begin second reading of Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act.

On Tuesday, August 26, we hope to resume debate on second reading of Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act, and resume second reading debate on Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2).

On Wednesday, August 27, the House hopes to resume debate on second reading of Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2), and resume second reading debate on Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act.

Finally, on Thursday, August 28, we would like to resume second reading of Bill 142, the Social Assistance Reform Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, August 25, at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

opposite. I want the eventual official plan to recognize the differences in approaches, because the downtown inner core is very different from how some of Scarborough has developed or how North York has developed.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I expect the council will soon figure that out.

**Ms Lankin:** Again, the member for Scarborough East chirps away. Do you not think it's important to allow people out there to know what's in the bill? Your minister hasn't gone through it. This is the first opportunity for people to understand.

**Mr Gilchrist:** It's on the Internet.

**Ms Lankin:** He says it's on the Internet. Do you know what? There are some constituents in my riding who don't have access to the Internet. And do you know what? They watch the legislative channel to hear MPPs debate bills and to talk about what's in a bill. You just spent 10 minutes talking about someone and complaining that they weren't talking about the bill. You were chirping away for 10 minutes, and chirping is what you do regularly in this House. I'm talking about what's in the bill, so maybe you could sit there, go back to your business and just allow us to go on and have a discussion here.

Let me go on in terms of what else is in this bill. The health and welfare section —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Scarborough East, the member for Beaches-Woodbine has the floor.

**Ms Lankin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Part VII of the bill, health and welfare: This is with respect to boards of health and it has a lot to do with dissolution of existing boards, the creation of new boards and a change in the way in which public health is administered. It deals with how those boards have governance over things like public hospitals, their relationship with that; homes for the aged, grants to homes for the aged for elder care; vesting and distribution of trust funds with respect to these homes; payments re the county of York home — this is a particular agreement that's in place where the county of York, which is outside the new megacity, the Metro area, but has residents from this area — there is a reciprocal or a payment agreement, so it talks about that; special welfare assistance; a number of things such as the Regent Park South nursery school. There are some anomalies under health and welfare that have to be continued or dealt with here.

One of the things I think we need to be very concerned about is later on in the bill there's a section dealing with members of municipal bodies. In that section we have the power to dissolve a number of existing municipal bodies. I'm just trying to find the reference to that section. Let me give you an example: the library boards, the historical boards, various planning bodies, and boards of health, as I mentioned.

I'm concerned about boards of health. We've had much debate in this House around things like Wellesley Hospital and the importance of having an urban health care plan and understanding the very different needs, urban health care needs, when you have high-density and in particular low-income areas, the impact of that on people's health, the particular kinds of treatments that are needed, particularly the kinds of resources that are needed. A number of years ago I was chair of the eastern health area of the Toronto board of health. The old city of Toronto had divided the city up into a number of regions and had local community people involved on area health boards which then the chair of fed into being part of the overall board of health, and there were reports back and forth. It was a very effective way to ensure that neighbourhoods were being addressed.

Not all boards of health within Metropolitan Toronto, the municipalities, operate on that basis. But not all of them have the same kind of high-density, low-income, inner-city urban needs that the city of Toronto board of health did. There are some other areas — I'm not disputing that — in the Metropolitan Toronto area, but the thing is that they've developed very different ways, and I'm proud of the work that the board of health of the city of Toronto has done.

I'm also proud of some of the incredible work that has been done in the borough of East York. For example, their medical officer of health and the public health unit there have embarked upon a heart healthy campaign. It's a huge campaign. It's designed to reach out to the people who live in that area in a very effective way. One of the reasons for that is the extraordinarily high population of senior citizens who live in that area. Their programs have been designed to meet the local health needs of the people. It's based on population health needs.

What happens to that kind of sensitivity to the local issues with an amalgamation? Why does the government feel it is necessary to dissolve public health boards and to amalgamate them? Why couldn't we, like we had the community councils, after a great furore in the megacity debate, a long furore — not a long debate, a long furore — in these chambers, the government finally moved an amendment to their bill to create community councils based on the boundaries of the old municipalities. They said this was their attempt to deal with the concerns that had been raised about the local constituency concerns and the culture and differences in the different cities. I think it doesn't replace local governance in the way we had it at all, but it was an attempt on the part of government to deal with that concern.

I think actually local health boards should have been treated similarly. Why could they not have been left under the purview of the councils? Why could they not have had some sense of the delivery programs that have been developed, which are very specific from region to region, municipality to municipality within Metro? Why could those not have been left in place?

This bill essentially says they won't be. If you're concerned about the delivery of public health in your municipality as it stands now, if you think there perhaps need to be some changes to how the government has proposed to dissolve those boards, then you'll want to get a copy of this. You'll want to read it and understand the implications. You'll want to have some time to talk to people in

the public health field to see if they think they can work through this, if it can be accomplished in a way different than having to dissolve the boards, or even with the boards dissolved, can we still fund regional offices, is there a way to accomplish the goal without changing the government's proposal? Those sorts of things you'll want to have time to do and come forward and to make presentations before the committee. I don't know all the answers to that yet. I have some significant concerns in that area.

Part VIII deals with parks and recreation, bylaws around the sale of liquor in certain parks. Let me tell you, I've got one of them, a city park down along the waterfront. This is in the Beaches area. There is sale of liquor there. There's a boardwalk café some of you may know. There's a very nice restaurant. Let me pitch for that part of the city. There are also some outlets, vending — there's only one person who has a contract or whatever to vend in that whole park and a long interesting story as to how that came about. But this section deals with that.

I know that has been an issue of huge debate within my community and with other communities about whether or not there should be any commercial sales within a public park, a city park. If you've got concerns about that or you think that issue should be addressed or not continued or the provincial government should set some uniform standards on this, you'll want to come and make representation under this section of the act.

There are a few different things here that are, again, very technical and understandable, such as the agreement with the Guild Inn — people may not know that Metro has a relationship in terms of the ownership of the Guild Inn — and Exhibition Place, a relationship there. Although it is interesting, this does continue the board but it also talks about former employees of the association of the Exhibition Stadium Corp. If you're a former employee, you may want to address that.

The Chair is indicating to me that it's almost 6 of the clock. I want to indicate that I've got to part VIII, this is just from the index, in detailing the sorts of things that this bill deals with. There are 18 sections. I'll have plenty of time when we resume debate on this to go through the rest of it.

The bottom line that I want to stress, just in closing this debate for today, is that this bill is likely, given indications we've had from the government House leader, to be forced through quick reading and time allocation over the next week and then out to committee within a week or two. If any of the areas that I've touched on so far are areas that are of concern to you, that you want to have input into, you need the bill now, you need to get your name in to come to committee, you need the time to be able to reflect and understand what changes or concerns you have and bring that forth to us here so that debate can take place in committee.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I have the weekly business statement.

Pursuant to standing 55, I wish to indicate the business for the week of August 25, 1997.

On Monday, August 25, during the afternoon sitting, the House will begin second reading of Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act.

On Tuesday, August 26, we hope to resume debate on second reading of Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act, and resume second reading debate on Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2).

On Wednesday, August 27, the House hopes to resume debate on second reading of Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2), and resume second reading debate on Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act.

Finally, on Thursday, August 28, we would like to resume second reading of Bill 142, the Social Assistance Reform Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, August 25, at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

## Thursday 21 August 1997


### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Coat of arms**, private member's notice of motion number 64, *Mr Jordan*
Mr Jordan ..... 11397, 11404
Mr Gerretsen ..... 11398
Mr Len Wood ..... 11399
Mr McLean ..... 11400
Mr Miclash ..... 11401
Mr Christopherson ..... 11402
Mr Arnott ..... 11403
Mr Gilchrist ..... 11403
Mr O'Toole ..... 11404
Agreed to ..... 11404

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Government mailing**
Mr Miclash ..... 11405
**School trustees**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11405
**Swansea Horticultural Society**
Mr Shea ..... 11405
**Standing orders reform**
Mr Cordiano ..... 11405
Ms Churley ..... 11406
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11406
**Henley Regatta site**
Mr Froese ..... 11406
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Gerretsen ..... 11406
**Fastball tournament**
Mr Galt ..... 11407

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Child protection**
Mrs Ecker ..... 11407
Mr McGuinty ..... 11409
Ms Lankin ..... 11409
**Workers' compensation**
Mrs Witmer ..... 11408
Mr Patten ..... 11409
Mr Christopherson ..... 11410
**Survivors' benefits**
Mr Jackson ..... 11408
Mr Patten ..... 11409

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Child protection**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11410
Mrs Ecker ..... 11410
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11411
Mr Sterling ..... 11411, 11412, 11413
Mr Agostino ..... 11412
Mr Christopherson ..... 11412
Ms Churley ..... 11413
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Wildman ..... 11413
Mr Leach ..... 11413
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bradley ..... 11414
Mr Saunderson ..... 11414
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11415
**Children's aid societies**
Ms Lankin ..... 11415
Mrs Ecker ..... 11415
**Natural gas suppliers**
Mr Klees ..... 11416
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11416
**Fund-raising**
Mr Phillips ..... 11416
Mr Villeneuve ..... 11416
**Education financing**
Mr Wildman ..... 11417
Mr Snobelen ..... 11417
**Social assistance**
Mr Pettit ..... 11417
Mrs Ecker ..... 11418
**Drought relief in Renfrew**
Mr Conway ..... 11418
Mr Villeneuve ..... 11418
**Municipal taxation**
Mr Pouliot ..... 11418
Mr Leach ..... 11419

### PETITIONS

**Standing orders reform**
Mr Sergio ..... 11419
Mr Wildman ..... 11421
**Women's College Hospital**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11419
Ms Martel ..... 11421
**Court decision**
Mr O'Toole ..... 11420, 11421, 11422
**Crematorium in Vaughan**
Mr Sergio ..... 11420
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11420
**Bear hunting**
Mr Hudak ..... 11420
Mr O'Toole ..... 11421
**Wellesley Central Hospital**
Mr Gerretsen ..... 11421
Mr Colle ..... 11422
**Petitions**
Mr Wildman ..... 11422

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

**Standing Committee on the legislative assembly**
Mr Tascona ..... 11422
Report adopted ..... 11422

### FIRST READINGS

**Korean Canadian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto Act, 1997**, Bill Pr87, *Mr Jim Brown*
Agreed to ..... 11422
**Services Improvement Act, 1997**, Bill 152, *Mrs Ecker*
Agreed to ..... 11423

### SECOND READINGS

**City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2)**
Bill 148, *Mr Leach*
Mr Leach ..... 11423, 11424
Mr Gerretsen ..... 11424, 11439
Mr Turnbull ..... 11424
Mr Kennedy ..... 11425
Mr Colle ..... 11430, 11432, 11440
Mr Christopherson ..... 11438
Mr Gilchrist ..... 11439
Ms Lankin ..... 11439
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11444

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Business of the House**
David Johnson ..... 11444


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Jeudi 21 août 1997


### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur l'amélioration des services,** projet de loi 152, *M^me^ Ecker*
Adoptée ..... 11422

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto (n° 2),** projet de loi 148, *M. Leach*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11423

AZ ON
XI
-D23

Government Publications

No. 218 Nº 218

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Monday 25 August 1997**

**Lundi 25 août 1997**

LIBRARY
AUG 29 1997

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

**Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

**Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

**Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

**Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

**Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 août 1997

*The House met at 1332.*

*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** On many occasions I have risen to express my deep concerns about the closure of regional offices of family support and the crisis in the new Family Responsibility Office. Only a very small percentage of cases are solved quickly. Most require repeated phone calls which leave my constituency assistants on hold for 20 minutes or more waiting to speak to an agent. Since last year, my long-distance costs have more than doubled; FRO is the cause of that huge increase.

It takes many weeks to resolve problems. One of my faxes was not picked up for a month. The system is not working, Minister. It is not working for those who must pay, it is not working for the custodial parents and children are suffering. Families must resort to self-help groups to get your attention.

In Chatham a group called TNT, Takes No Time, has been set up to urge the government to take action. These are not government cheques that you are delaying. This is not welfare and it is not charity; it is court-ordered support payments. You've had more than a year to address this problem. When are you going to fix this crisis?

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission was created by the province 95 years ago, in 1902, to open up the vast area of northern Ontario. Since then the economic development of the area has been closely linked to the services provided by the ONTC.

The ONTC is facing unprecedented downsizing and budget cuts, for example, $10 million in the last budget, and the cuts are just as deep as any faced by municipalities and various other provincial agencies. Right now, the passenger train service that runs between Cochrane and Toronto is under scrutiny. What will be the outcome of this study? No one knows; certainly the officials of the commission do not know.

The population of northern Ontario is worried. What is the future of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission? They have already lost the quality of service of NorOntair. They now face the possibility of losing the passenger train services they have come to enjoy for so many years.

Their worries don't stop there though. More and more people are now raising concerns about the freight train services as well, particularly on the level of safety. Recently, two derailments in the Kapuskasing area occurred over a period of two weeks. Add these incidents to another derailment in the past year. People are raising questions. Within the context of the cuts and downsizing, they are demanding an explanation. Is there any relationship between the government's agenda and these derailments?

How do we explain the sudden high frequency of accidents? Are the cutbacks and downsizing affecting the proper maintenance of the lines so much that the public and workers' safety is at stake? People are concerned and they're worried.

### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** I rise today to speak to an issue which is on the minds of a great many Canadians, not only in Ontario but across this great land.

Last year there was a resolution put forward in this House by my colleague the member for Dufferin-Peel with regard to section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada, commonly referred to as the faint hope clause. The resolution called upon the federal government to repeal this odious section of the Criminal Code, introduced by the federal Liberal government in 1976, which allows murderers to apply for parole earlier than permitted by their original sentences. This section gives those serving a life sentence a chance of an early parole and to have a hearing concerning early parole.

The rationale for this section at the time was to justify continued abolition of capital punishment. A life sentence was supposed to mean a life sentence, not 15 years and then parole. The punishment must fit the crime. Rehabilitation is one factor but it is not a primary factor in a crime such as murder with a relatively low rate of repeat offenders. Retribution and general deterrence must be considered paramount.

The federal government to date has refused to repeal section 745, and now we have the spectacle of Clifford

Olson applying for early parole under section 745. This is a disgrace.

I invite my colleagues to join me in imploring the government of Canada to act immediately and repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code and, in so doing, stop the grievous injustice it inflicts upon innocent victims of crime and their families.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** What do King Henry VIII and the Mike Harris government have in common? According to a judgement of the Ontario Court of Justice, they are both big bullies.

Justice Archie Campbell described as "breathtaking" a clause in the government's bill on school board amalgamation. This clause gives cabinet the right to amend its own act by regulation — no debate, no vote in the Legislature, cabinet just sits down and makes its own laws.

Justice Campbell notes that this kind of clause is called the King Henry VIII clause by legal historians because it gives cabinet exactly the same kind of autocratic power that King Henry gave himself — the power to make laws by proclamation.

Now, with the new rule changes that have been once again forced on this Legislature, the Harris-King Henry VIII government is even freer to drive through its agenda, with no right to be heard for those who will be affected by the changes. Even existing laws can be arbitrarily overruled by the Harris cabinet, which keeps putting itself above the law, just as it puts itself above the people.

Time and time again we have seen this government discard any interest in hearing the opinions, the views, the concerns of those who would be affected by its changes. Even today, with the Toronto hospitals in court challenging the unilateral decisions of the commission, they say the views of those people made no difference. One big difference is that King Henry VIII is dead. We can all hope that the Harris government soon will be.

## CHARITABLE GAMING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** This morning at 10 o'clock the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation held a press conference in the media studio to announce the government's plans with respect to charitable gaming casinos in the province and the allocation of the funds. I note with interest that the minister is not scheduled to make a statement here in the House and I think that's very unfortunate.

But let me say that it was a disgraceful performance. I think people were very disappointed. The minister absolutely guaranteed that the charities will be receiving up to $180 million of new revenues and she was able to talk about what percentage that was of the revenues coming in as a result of video slot machines and expanded gambling in local community neighbourhoods. When asked what the government's take was, however, the minister had no answer. We found that quite perplexing.

I say to the minister, perhaps some assistance with a little calculator might have been helpful. If you expect that the charities are going to receive $100 million from video slot machines and you say that is 10% of the revenues — guess what? — total revenues look to be about $1 billion, and $900 million going to the government.

It is a quick grab at money. I think what I find so offensive is that the minister spoke about a great deal of consultation about how to allocate the moneys, but the government refuses to consult with communities like mine in Beaches about the fact that we don't want a charity casino there in the first place.

**1340**

## SERGE LECLAIR

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I rise today to honour a constituent of mine, Serge Leclair, one of five recipients of the Award of Excellence presented by the Honourable Noble Villeneuve, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

This prestigious award, presented annually by the ministry, recognizes excellence in academic achievement, leadership abilities and community involvement. The award is presented to one student in each graduating class of a diploma program supported by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr Leclair is a hardworking and highly prominent student at Kemptville College. He enriched the life of every student on campus in his varied roles as activities chair for student council, master of ceremonies at the OPAC banquet in 1997, and a member of both the yearbook committee and the athletics committee.

His academic achievements are also worth noting. In just five semesters he earned not only a diploma in horticulture but also a certificate in powered equipment. At graduation he served at class valedictorian.

Mr Leclair is now using his knowledge and experience to excel in the private sector.

The four other students are Beverley Goodwin, of the independent study program at the University of Guelph; Nancy French, of the Ontario Agricultural College; Pierrette Séguin, of Alfred College; and Shannon Ward, of Ridgetown College.

I would like to thank the Honourable Noble Villeneuve, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, for taking the time to present this award. I would also like to congratulate Mr Leclair and all the other award winners on their fine achievements.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** In all the discussions about this government's downloading of responsibilities on to the municipalities, there may be one area that has not received the attention it should, and that's the area of public health programs.

This is an issue of great concern in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, and unless the Minister of Health

manages to change the Premier's mind, all public health programs must be funded by our cash-strapped municipalities come January 1, 1998.

To make public health part of the downloading package is simply wrong, and I believe that you must surely feel the same way. As Dr David Williams, the medical officer of health for the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, put it to me: "A fragmented, decentralized public health system will not be capable of providing the people of Ontario with a timely, informed and coordinated response to outbreaks of disease."

While this downloading has potentially hazardous consequences in all areas of public health, I want to draw your attention to the vital need to maintain the genetic counselling program in particular. The families of patients affected by genetic diseases such as Huntington's, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and ALS need to be helped locally. Some of these patients in their later years cannot travel at all.

Minister, listen to the pleas of our area doctors and nurses as well as people such as Heather Labelle, the area representative for Huntington's disease, and make the decision to take public health off the downloading table and give all of us reassurance that the genetic counselling program will stay in place in the north.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I rise to advise the House that just a couple of hours ago Dr Matthew Bramley of Greenpeace held a news conference at the Howard Johnson Connaught in downtown Hamilton and announced the results of studies they had done on some of the soil from the Plastimet fire site. They said at the news conference that the results, which have been verified by independent laboratories, said they found 25,000 parts per trillion of toxic equivalent of dioxin at a time when the cleanup guideline for contaminated industrial land is 1,000 parts per trillion.

What we should appreciate, for those of us who are laypeople, is the fact that Dr Bramley found — I'll read his words:

"Greenpeace has consistently stated there would be extensive dioxin contamination because of the large amount of the PVC plastic that burned, but I was shocked when I saw these figures. None of the past PVC fires documented by Greenpeace generated dioxin levels quite so high. I am concerned for firefighters and others who have been exposed to this material without adequate protection."

He goes on to say that this makes the Plastimet site probably the most toxic in Canada. Yet this government persists in stonewalling in terms of a public inquiry. After today's announcement, there can be no excuse for not having that public inquiry.

## SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** Last Friday I had the pleasure of being a guest at the opening of the Assistive Devices Program Centre at the Hamilton office of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. The program at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind is designed to provide an assessment centre for visually impaired and blind individuals in order to make available various equipment and technologies to enhance the independence of their lives.

The technologies available to blind and visually impaired individuals are truly exciting. From the simplest computer enhancement providing large print to the scanners that read written text and articulate it in a human voice, the ADP program offers a valuable service to members of our community in Hamilton. What is more, Hamilton-area residents will no longer have to travel to facilities out of town in Kitchener and Toronto. The assistive devices program is right in their backyard.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the cooperative efforts of the community in Hamilton who raised $150,000 for the program, as well as the Ministry of Health, which contributed $200,000 to open the doors for a new program that already has a waiting list.

I know the CNIB appreciated the attendance of the Minister of Health, the Honourable Jim Wilson, at the opening of the program, and I would as well pass along my personal thanks to the minister for his assistance.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was just wondering, with the new rules in place, when we have visitors — we have the Sam Tu Dang from England visiting us today — is it appropriate to introduce them and welcome them to Canada? Would that be appropriate?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** You mean in the gallery? No, that's inappropriate.

**Mr Curling:** We welcome them anyway.

# INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## CITY OF HAMILTON ACT (LICENSING COMMITTEE), 1997

Mrs Ross moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr65, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

# MOTIONS

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c), the House shall meet

from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm on Tuesday, August 26, 1997, Wednesday, August 27, 1997, Tuesday, September 2, 1997, and Wednesday, September 3, 1997, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Johnson, Don Mills, moves — dispense? No?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I'd like to get up on a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** There's no point of order, to the member for St Catharines. This is just a motion and it's moved by the government.

**Mr Bradley:** But the point of order I would like to make —

**The Speaker:** Okay, I'll hear your point of order if you like.

**Mr Bradley:** The point of order I have is that the new rules of the House, the new dictatorship, begin today, not last week. I understand the motion was filed last week, before the rules came into effect. If they were to be filed today, I'd fully understand that. I'd say: "Yes, that's the new rules. Too bad, but that's the way it is." But these were filed last week, and surely to be in effect, that motion should have been filed when the new rules were in effect, which was after midnight on Thursday night.

**The Speaker:** Although you're accurate, correct in the way you've listed the sequence of events, the fact is it matters not when a motion is filed; it only matters when a motion is called. They've called the motion today, and we now are under the jurisdiction of the new rules, so in fact they're not out of order. It's just that simple. Anybody can file any motion and ask the opposition party about filing an extra day for debate on opposition day. You can file it, but if it's attempted to be called or you're brought forward, it's out of order.

They filed this last week. It's true the House wasn't under those rules, but they called it today. We are under those rules and it's perfectly in order.

Pursuant to standing order 9(c), the House shall meet from 6:30 to 9:30 pm on Tuesday, August 26, 1997, Wednesday, August 27, 1997, Tuesday, September 2, 1997, and Wednesday, September 3, 1997, for the purpose of considering government business. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 15-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1350 to 1405.*

**The Speaker:** Order. All those in favour of the motion please rise and be recognized by the Clerk one at a time.

**Ayes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Arnott, Ted | Johns, Helen | Saunderson, William |
| Baird, John R. | Johnson, David | Shea, Derwyn |
| Bassett, Isabel | Kells, Morley | Sheehan, Frank |
| Beaubien, Marcel | Klees, Frank | Skarica, Toni |
| Boushy, Dave | Leadston, Gary L. | Smith, Bruce |
| Brown, Jim | Martiniuk, Gerry | Snobelen, John |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Maves, Bart | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Clement, Tony | McLean, Allan K. | Stewart, R. Gary |
| Elliott, Brenda | Munro, Julia | Tsubouchi, David H. |
| Ford, Douglas B. | Mushinski, Marilyn | Turnbull, David |
| Fox, Gary | O'Toole, John | Vankoughnet, Bill |
| Froese, Tom | Palladini, Al | Villeneuve, Noble |
| Grimmett, Bill | Parker, John L. | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Hamick, Charles | Rollins, E.J. Douglas | Wood, Bob |
| Hastings, John | Ross, Lillian | Young, Terence H. |
| Hodgson, Chris | Runciman, Robert W. | |
| Hudak, Tim | Sampson, Rob | |

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agostino, Dominic | Curling, Alvin | McLeod, Lyn |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Grandmaître, Bernard | Morin, Gilles E. |
| Boyd, Marion | Gravelle, Michael | North, Peter |
| Bradley, James J. | Hampton, Howard | Patten, Richard |
| Brown, Michael A. | Hoy, Pat | Phillips, Gerry |
| Christopherson, David | Kennedy, Gerard | Pouliot, Gilles |
| Churley, Marilyn | Kormos, Peter | Ramsay, David |
| Colle, Mike | Kwinter, Monte | Sergio, Mario |
| Conway, Sean G. | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Wildman, Bud |
| Cordiano, Joseph | Lankin, Frances | Wood, Len |
| Crozier, Bruce | Martin, Tony | |

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 49, the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I think the House leader should move even more expeditiously to get bills through this House. He's moving too slowly.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Who's your question to, member for Lawrence?

**Mr Cordiano:** It's to the House leader, the minister. Last week, without notice or warning, you betrayed municipal leaders who were willing to work with you to sort out the mess you created on Who Does What legislation. By introducing legislation late last Thursday, you broke all faith. You introduced it late in the day, with as little media coverage as possible and without any statement in this House. It's obvious that what you really intended to do was to avoid this House, the media, municipal officials and the people of this province. You're running away from everyone, Minister. You simply aren't willing to guarantee that your downloading on to municipalities will be revenue-neutral, and so you're trying to hide that possibility.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr Cordiano:** How could you possibly introduce this legislation without at least first talking to municipalities and then —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. Minister.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** First of all, I would say that this legislation was introduced at

the normal time in the Legislature, on a normal basis. There's no requirement for a minister's statement in terms of a bill. In some instances there are ministers' statements; in other cases there are no ministers' statements.

Finally, I would say that the province has been discussing this very matter with the municipalities for some considerable period of time. In fact back in June, I believe it was, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, many of the municipal leaders came forward with a recommendation in terms of the splitting of responsibilities and the splitting of funding between the municipalities and the province, and that is what was accepted by the province of Ontario and implemented through this bill, the services improvement bill.

**Mr Cordiano:** Here is what a few municipal representatives had to say about your bill and the way you introduced it. In fact, no one trusts you any more. Terry Mundell, the head of AMO, after you quietly introduced your bill, said: "What does that tell you about partnership? Trust, respect for our level of government is not coming through."

Or Markham Mayor Don Cousens, a former colleague, on how much trust he places on your guarantee that the downloading will be revenue-neutral: "I'd like to have something in legislation" to guarantee that.

Municipalities say your plans will increase taxes, as high as 75% in the Premier's own riding. You say they're all wrong. No one believes you any more. Even your own back bench is doubting your credibility.

I ask you again to withdraw this bill until you can guarantee to municipalities that it is in fact revenue-neutral and that people won't be facing huge property tax increases.

**Hon David Johnson:** I think the member opposite would agree with me when I say that obviously not all of the municipal leaders are wrong. For example, I'll give you the quote of one of those involved at the municipal level. The quote is: "Chiarelli vowed not to raise taxes. Chiarelli says the downloaded responsibilities can be absorbed with no tax increase."

Mayor Mel Lastman says: "I can come with a zero tax increase. There's no doubt in my mind that it can be done for the new city of Toronto."

Terry Mundell has said, "The reality of the situation is that the province told us about a year ago that the $667 million is being eliminated, but the rest can be absorbed." That's our view, that the municipalities will be able to absorb and not put taxes up. Indeed, there's a considerable amount of support for the disentanglement process that we have initiated.

**Mr Cordiano:** It's obvious this government is not listening — not listening to AMO representatives, Terry Mundell, Don Cousens, various other mayors across the province. It's obvious this government has something to hide when it comes to this piece of legislation. What's in it is the inability of the government to guarantee that any of the changes will be revenue-neutral to the municipalities. You've failed to confirm this. You have failed to reassure municipalities that it is in fact revenue-neutral.

In the end, what are municipalities left to do but throw up their hands and say, "We can't trust this government"? Time and again you've shown that the people of this province cannot look to you for trust in the way that you can bring forward a piece of legislation that deals with these additional costs. Some $670 million in additional costs will be dumped on to municipalities, and what do you say them? You say, "Trust us."

They have tried to trust you. The very people who were working with you, those same municipal representatives, are saying you have failed to consult with them. You introduced legislation without even talking to them. Minister, withdraw the bill.

**The Speaker:** Member for Lawrence, please take your seat. Minister.

**Hon David Johnson:** In fact there have been very extensive consultations. I would say that even at the present time, as we speak here today, the Minister of Municipal Affairs is speaking and dialoguing with the members of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Indeed a number of ministers will be attending the AMO conference this week. There is considerable dialoguing.

I reiterate once again that this government sat down with many of the municipal leaders, and the proposal that's coming forward that's encompassed in the Services Improvement Act comes out of those discussions with the municipal leaders. They have asked for this for years. The previous government attempted to deliver on the request for disentanglement. They failed. We have taken it one step further. We have taken it that step to success in conjunction with the municipal leaders. There will be no tax increase. There will be a better division of services. It will be a more efficient and effective service.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Environment. This morning I, along with my colleague David Christopherson, the member for Hamilton Centre, attended a press conference by Greenpeace at which they released the onsite soil testing from the Plastimet fire that was taken the day of and the day after the fire. This test was done by General Laboratories, an independent company that has done work for the federal and provincial ministries, a credible firm.

These tests on the site showed that the Plastimet fire site contained 25 times the maximum acceptable dioxin rate for an industrial site. The same tests showed that it exceeded the agricultural land maximum level by 250 times. These are absolutely shocking numbers. Greenpeace said this morning, "This site is now one of the most toxic sites in Canada."

The evidence is overwhelming. The health effects are there. Over 100 firefighters, over 100 hospital workers, 38% of the residents have been impacted. You are the only one left in this province who doesn't believe there's a problem. Will you now recommend to your cabinet an immediate public inquiry into the Plastimet fire?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I have not seen the Greenpeace results. However, as I understand it, they confirm what the Ministry of Environment has known for a long, long time — I'm talking far before this government was in power — that this is a very contaminated site. However, in spite of the fact that previous governments have had some opportunity to clean up this particular site, this government is doing that at this present time. We have —

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** What are you talking about?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I'm talking about the three fires that were there when you were Solicitor General, Mr Christopherson, and you didn't do anything about it.

**Mr Christopherson:** There's a plastic fire that put firefighters out of —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton Centre, please come to order.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We took dioxin samples off the site in the community and those results were normal, and that is what we were trying to protect in terms of the some 3,000 samples we took after and during the fire. We are onsite. We are attempting to have this site cleaned up like it's never been cleaned up before.

**Mr Agostino:** I am amazed at the smugness, the arrogance and the lack of concern this minister continues to show for the people of Hamilton and for the people who have been involved in that fire.

You and your ministry have the results of the onsite soil testing. We confirmed Friday afternoon that your ministry has the results but does not plan to release them later in the week. You have seen those numbers. You have seen the Greenpeace numbers. What are you trying to hide? What are you trying to cover up? Frankly, why are you more concerned with regard to the public relations and covering your butt and your ministry's butt rather than be concerned about the impact of this fire?

We have two choices here: Either the Greenpeace numbers are accurate, as we believe they are, or you today have to release your numbers that your ministry has that were confirmed Friday afternoon, that show the onsite soil testing shows the levels to exceed the standards by far.

Minister, will you today in the question period release the results that your ministry confirmed on Friday you have?

**1420**

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We are not afraid to release any of the results we have. Those are available under the freedom of information act. We'd be pleased to do that. I know there's concern in the Hamilton community with regard to this fire and the results of this fire. That's why we have taken a substantial public information program. We have sent officials down there when they've been asked to go down. We have a public information trailer. We have a citizens' committee. We've provided the community with $40,000 to confirm any of our results. We are a completely open book on this and we will continue to be a completely open book, because we're concerned about the health of these people. We don't want to make this a political debate; we want to make it an information debate. We have in fact provided all the information to the community and to the municipal politicians as well.

**Mr Agostino:** It's unbelievable that the minister has not been able to tell us today that he will release those numbers. What are you hiding? You have the numbers. Why are you afraid to release that information to the people of Hamilton?

The Premier agreed there should be a public inquiry. You've said you were not afraid of a public inquiry. The Minister of Health on Friday said, "The government would have to support an inquiry if health and other authorities add their voice." City council has asked for a public inquiry. I spoke to the regional chairman last night. He has said that he supports the call for a public inquiry and he will ask regional council to do so.

I cannot believe you are still continuing to hide behind some screen and lack of accountability you have when the reality is that your mishandling, your cuts, your incompetence in responding to this fire have led to the danger we have on that particular site today.

If you're not afraid, if you have nothing to hide, release those numbers, recommend to your cabinet that there be a public inquiry. Failure to do that, Minister, will clearly show that you are more concerned about covering your butt and your ministry's butt than taking care of the problem in Hamilton. Will you call today to your cabinet for a public inquiry —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As I said before, any numbers I have, the member is welcome to them. With all 3,000 tests we've taken, the public is entitled to see the results of each and every one of those tests. We have no fear about anyone seeing what those tests were and how they were provided.

In fact, I want to just read from acting mayor Dave Wilson's letter to me: "As you know, staff of your ministry were at the scene of the fire within an hour and have continued to be onsite to this day. With their valuable input and excellent advice they were able to give us the information we needed to make critical decisions in a timely manner. Had we not had their assistance, we would have been faced with a radically different situation."

We have continued since this fire started. We're still on the site. We're still taking tests. We're still providing information. We will release any results we have, not just soil tests from last week. We will release all the results.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New Question, third party.

**Mr Christopherson:** Is my microphone on? There we go. That's got it. I want to make sure he hears me, because so far everything he's done indicates he's not listening. My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, I want to join with my colleague Liberal MPP Dominic Agostino from Hamilton East and say to you, if you want a non-partisan approach, you've got it from over here. We're not playing any kind of party politics here when we call for a public inquiry. All of city

council unanimously passed it, which includes, as you know, well-known Tories. Recently, the Minister of Health, your colleague who sits two seats beside you, said that if the medical officer of health asked for a public inquiry he would agree with one.

Minister, you know that as elected people we are the ones who are accountable. I want to ask you, if regional council, which is the political body that the medical officer of health answers to locally, passes a resolution calling for a public inquiry, will you join with your colleague the Minister of Health and recommend to the cabinet that there be a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire in Hamilton?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Because of my concern for the people of Hamilton, I of course would consider any request seriously. If that is done, I will consider it seriously at that point in time.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, it's getting a little better but we've still got a long way to go here before we hear you mouth the words, "Yes, there will be a public inquiry." Understand something, Minister: Nothing less is acceptable to the people in our community of Hamilton — nothing less than a public inquiry.

So far, as I've mentioned, we've got the unanimous support of city council, we've got firefighters who are facing serious health problems as a result of this, we've got the OPSEU workers, who are your ministry representatives on the front line, saying, "Yes, there needs to be a public inquiry." We've got a number of environmental groups, including Greenpeace. We've got the Toronto board of health twice now, one just on Friday. The Spectator editorial board, not known to be a real left-wing group, has also called for a public inquiry.

The Public Inquiries Act says there only needs to be public concern for a public inquiry to be called. I'd like you to lay out right now, if you won't call one today, what exactly is your threshold for calling a public inquiry. What are the details?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I just want to indicate to the member my concern about the health of the firefighters. We have in the past provided the fire chief with all of the information he has required during the fire and after the fire. We've provided that same information to the medical officer of health so that she could provide information to them about the health effects of the results of the fire, and we will continue to do that.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, I don't know if you fully appreciate how your answers sound. You're dodging the issue. You're abdicating your responsibility. We need leadership from you on this. You're the point person for this government in terms of this disaster that fell upon our community. You have that responsibility. You also have the ability to hold a public inquiry.

You keep standing up and saying you care and you're providing information. That's all that the people in our community are asking for; not for you to fall on your sword but for you to give them a transparent process that allows all the facts on the table. There's so much discrepancy here in terms of information our people have had, all the way from, "Be happy, don't worry," to, "Don't let your kids go out in the backyard in the middle of summer." That's the kind of discrepancy and you know what happened at the last public meeting.

Minister, you owe it to the platform you were elected on and you owe it to the people of Hamilton to say that you really care and show that you care and call for that public inquiry.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I've said before and I'll say it again: We have provided all of the information. We're an open book. We're willing to provide any additional information which people would like to try to deal with this situation. I would only say to the former minister, he ought to know, and the member for Hamilton East ought to know that it's not in the mandate of the Ministry of Environment to call an inquiry.

**Mr Christopherson:** You're stonewalling. What are you hiding, Norm?

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, I warn you. You must come to order. Member for Durham East, if you could take your seat, that would be helpful too. Minister.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Let me make this clear. If in fact the member or the council or some citizens have some sound reasons, some sound evidence of the need for an inquiry, I would be pleased to pass those along to the Attorney General, who is responsible for calling public inquiries.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the government House leader and acting Premier for the day. Minister, last Thursday you dropped your download bill on this Legislature late in the afternoon. You gave no notice to municipal leaders, no notice to the public, no notice to any members here, no notice to the press. Can you tell us why your government feels it has to be so secretive? What is it that you have to hide? Why do you try to so hard to shut the public out of the democratic process and keep them in the dark? Can you tell us that?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I'm very happy to say that this government has pursued the democratic process in great detail. In fact the Minister of Municipal Affairs is speaking today with AMO. The Premier will be speaking with the association of municipalities later this week. A number of ministers will be present this week at the association of municipalities annual convention.

Over the course of this year there have been extensive negotiations and meetings between the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the municipalities. Other ministers have met; indeed, the substance of this particular bill is one that resulted from those meetings and from the association itself coming forward with suggestions that the province accepted and implemented.

This is much the same process, except with more consultation, that the previous government went through.

The previous government tried to address some of these same problems and failed. Our process, of this government, has resulted in a successful conclusion.

**1430**

**Mr Hampton:** Let me suggest to the government House leader why his government was trying to be so secretive about this and why they introduced an omnibus piece of legislation at the end of a legislative week with no notice to anyone. The reason you're being so secretive is because this is a tax grab. You are going to grab municipal property taxes to pay for ambulance services, public health services, policing services, fire services, seniors' apartments and non-profit housing, social assistance and much more.

This is a tax grab by your government of municipal tax dollars. You're going after municipal property taxpayers. This bill is all about municipalities pay and you have all the say; that's what it's about. Minister, let me ask you this: Since it's a tax grab and your government promised not to raise taxes, will you withdraw this bill until you come clean and share with municipalities the full amount you're going to download on them?

**Hon David Johnson:** I guess the leader of the third party feels an authority on tax increases since his government increased taxes 32 times during its jurisdiction. The present government is not about tax increases. This government is about tax reduction. We have reduced the provincial personal income tax. The workers' compensation premiums will be reduced. The health payments will be reduced.

According to some of the main candidates in the upcoming municipal election, such as Mel Lastman — and I presume his campaign committee and chair — and Bob Chiarelli, people like that are saying, "Taxes will not go up." We firmly believe that because this is not a tax grab, this is not a download; this is simply a division of funding that your government failed to implement but this government, working with municipal leaders, has been able to accomplish.

**Mr Hampton:** I understand when the government House leader is trying to spin a story, but this even goes beyond anything you've tried before.

Yes, governments from time to time have to raise taxes, but at least some other governments in the past were honest about it. They didn't try to hide a $500 tuition fee increase and say, "It's not a tax grab." No other government hit seniors with a $200- to $300-a year prescription medicine user fee and tried to say, "It's not a tax grab." No other government shoved off on municipalities a whole long list of new user fees and then didn't say, "It's a tax grab."

Your government, if you add up all the user fees, all the new tuition fees, all the new fees you've assessed low-income seniors and people across this province, has had more tax increases in the last two years than probably any government in the last 10. But I come back to the question: Will you withdraw this bill until —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, leader of the third party. Minister.

**Hon David Johnson:** No, this bill will not be withdrawn. This bill results from the many municipal leaders getting together and recommending how this division of responsibilities and funding should proceed. The government has accepted their advice and that is encapsulated in this particular bill.

This government has had to make government more efficient and more effective. That's what we promised to do. We were faced, because of the NDP government in the 1990s, with a debt of some $100 billion, with deficits of $11 billion. We have reduced expenditures throughout Ontario, but at the same time we have put taxes down. I fully believe that with this better division of services, provision of services, funding of services, municipal taxes will go down because municipalities will be able to be more effective and more efficient.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Last Thursday I was asking questions of the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism about the outrageous price of gasoline in this province for motorists, both those who are visiting and those who reside in this province. His response was: "It is not the purpose of this government to interfere in corporate actions. We live in a free enterprise environment." He also said: "We on this side of the House believe in the free enterprise system. We don't intend to dictate to companies what they should and should not do, provided they act with reason."

Do you believe that the big oil companies in this province that are gouging the consumers are acting within reason? Is it your intention to protect the consumers of this province against these outrageous gas prices or are you prepared to continue to apologize for the oil barons of this province?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I would like to turn this question over to my colleague Minister Tsubouchi.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** Perhaps we can indicate, once again, the discussion we had on Thursday where I indicated I've already met with the independent gas dealers —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Once again, if we could revisit last Thursday when the member for St Catharines asked us again, I indicated that I already met with the independent gas dealers to discuss the issue.

Secondly, I indicated as well that this will be on the agenda for the interprovincial ministers' conference coming up this September in Saskatchewan. Clearly every minister of the crown of all the various provinces has a concern with this.

Thirdly, I've also taken the time to write to the Honourable John Manley to indicate that they should exercise

their powers under the Competition Act, for them to take some steps, because clearly it's a federal jurisdiction.

Fourthly, I've also written to the industry, the gas refiners, to ask them to ensure that the consumers of Ontario are well served.

**Mr Bradley:** The answer is the minister is doing nothing, as usual, except passing the buck to somebody else.

You have a chance to stand up for the consumers of this province, the motorists of this province, or to get into bed with the corporate barons, the oil barons who are charging outrageous prices for gasoline in this province. I'm asking you to take the side of consumers, to take positive action. Here's something within your jurisdiction and there's support all around this House for it.

Are you prepared to introduce a bill preventing predatory pricing, that is, major oil companies from selling for less to their own dealers than they do to independents and therefore wiping the independents out? Are you prepared to introduce in this province, with the support of all three parties, and it will get by in one afternoon, a bill prohibiting predatory pricing on the part of the major oil barons of this country?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** We are clearly concerned with this and we've taken more action than the member's government did when they were in power.

Mr Speaker, if I could beg your indulgence and take a very short trip down memory lane, I'll indicate to the member that when his own Premier, David Peterson, was confronted with this issue he indicated, "The member is very well aware that the federal government controls this issue, not us." He went on to say on April 29, and this is a good one: "I know it's not easy to impress upon socialists how the marketplace works. I do not want to give them an Economics 201 primer in this situation." Obviously Mr Bradley missed the primer because he's still asking the same questions.

Lastly, I'll indicate that Mr Peterson, who was the Premier at that point in time, on January 24, 1986, indicated that they will tell him clearly that he is asking the question in the wrong House. Obviously he didn't pay attention to his own Premier when they were in power.

**1440**

## AMBULANCE SERVICES

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** In the absence of the Minister of Health, I will ask my question of the Chair of Management Board and the former Minister of Health. The legislation your government introduced last Thursday requires municipalities to take over funding of all land ambulance services by January 1, 1998, and it requires that municipalities take over the delivery of ambulance service by January 1, 2000, neatly coinciding —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** You guys are as large as life when it comes to take credit and you won't do anything.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'm warning the member for St Catharines to come to order. I won't warn him again.

Can I just get who your question is to again? I'm sorry, member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** Certainly. I'm starting from the beginning, am I, Mr Speaker?

**The Speaker:** Okay, go ahead.

**Mrs Boyd:** Mr Speaker, it's to the Chair of Management Board and the former health minister because the Minister of Health is absent again today.

Minister, the legislation your government introduced last Thursday requires municipalities to take over full funding of land ambulance services by January 1, 1998, and requires that municipalities take over the delivery of ambulance services by January 1, 2000, a date neatly coinciding with most of the hospital closures that have been announced so far.

As services are rationalized, as there are fewer hospitals with greater levels of specialization, you're expecting municipalities to provide for the transportation of patients across greater distances and with more frequent transfers, and nowhere in this legislation are the criteria for service elaborated. It leaves many questions about what the response times will be, who will staff ambulances, what their training will be and what equipment is required.

Minister, why is there no assurance in this legislation that as the health care system becomes more reliant on the delivery of ambulance services, the people of Ontario can expect higher —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for London Centre. Minister?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** First of all, not being the Minister of Health at this present time I may not have all the specific information to respond to the question. But I will say that ambulance services are part of the transfer of responsibilities and funding between the province and the municipalities. It is a revenue-neutral situation. Municipalities I've always found to be very sincere and concerned about health issues, through the public health departments, for example. I'm very confident that the municipalities will look at what's required and do the right thing.

Here in Metropolitan Toronto, for example, the Metro ambulance services have shared in the funding 50-50 over the past number of years and delivered a top-flight ambulance service here. I'm confident that municipalities across Ontario, with the advice of the provincial government, will carry on in an excellent fashion the ambulance services.

**Mrs Boyd:** At a time when you're saying you want to integrate health services, where you want uniform quality of health services, what your legislation has done is create more confusion, more complication between municipal and provincial responsibilities for ambulance service.

According to the changes in the Ambulance Act, municipalities will have to fund most of it, but the prov-

ince will control some of it, and all jurisdictions are going to have to work out a morass of cross-boundary payments and chargebacks. In the end, the public will have no idea who is responsible for what. What is now a system of 172 operators could conceivably be a system with more than 800 operators. This is not straightening out who does what; it represents the exact opposite to what the Crombie panel recommended.

Minister, you've refused to give service criteria. You're creating greater confusion. Will you provide today the total cost projections for ambulance services, including the impact of hospital restructuring, to January 1, 2000?

**Hon David Johnson:** It's somewhat interesting that the previous government went through an exercise looking at the same problem, that for more accountability to ensure efficiency, the province should discuss with municipalities who should deliver what service and who should pay for what service. We have finally taken that to a successful conclusion, and part of that whole picture includes land ambulances.

I will say that notwithstanding that municipalities will have the responsibility, the ministry will continue to set standards and monitor those standards and enforce standards to ensure that the people of Ontario have an excellent service delivery and that the vehicles, equipment and qualifications of the service providers are up to proper standards.

## SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Minister, school board amalgamation is occurring across Ontario as we speak. The school boards are restructuring and changing under Bill 104. Our government has always stated that cost savings can and should be found outside the classroom. The purpose of the bill is to decrease costs while maintaining quality classroom education. What is the status of this transformation of school boards?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I'd like to thank the member for Peterborough for the question. He's quite correct on the premise of Bill 104, which is to move from 1,700 to 900 politicians in our education system; to reduce the cost of the bureaucracy and the administration of this system; and to focus on the individual student and the individual teacher in the classroom, to make sure all of our efforts are focused on those people in that critical relationship.

Bill 104 is an important building block as we build the future of education in the province step by step by step. It's our goal, with Bill 104 and with our other education initiatives, to lift our students from the clutches of mediocrity where they have found themselves and to fulfil our goal and our commitment, which is to have student performance in Ontario be the best in Canada, not in the middle of the pack.

I can tell you that things are going quite well in this transformation. We are managing the change well. Local education improvement committees are in place across Ontario, working on putting together this new, better education system.

**Mr Stewart:** Thank you, Minister. It sounds like it's working well.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Stewart:** If it wasn't working well, I wouldn't get this kind of response.

The minister often speaks of reducing bureaucracy and indeed duplication. Would the minister elaborate and provide this House with the information on how school board district 14, which is in my riding, is achieving those necessary cost savings while ensuring quality education, and are the objects of our government being met in this particular case?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'd confirm what the member for Peterborough has said: It is going quite well. In fact, although some people from the opposition may find it hard to believe, my mother recently told me that it was going well, and I trust what she has to say.

In all seriousness, we are —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Lest we digress, which happens from time to time in this chamber, let me say that we are in the very early stages of this transformation. There's lots of work to do but there are willing hands doing that work right across the province.

The estimates by experts were that we would be able to save $150 million by reducing the bureaucracy in the administration of education, and I'm pleased to say that in the member's riding, district school board 14 recently determined that they can eliminate three senior administrative positions for an annual saving of $400,000 in that board alone from that move alone. I think that's a positive indicator that we can reduce administration.

**1450**

## TRANSFER OF PROVINCIAL HIGHWAYS

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, two months ago you announced that the Harris government would be divesting itself of 50% of the provincial highway network in eastern Ontario. As part of that divestment, you plan to turn Highways 37 and 41 over to the respective counties of Hastings, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington and Renfrew. In the intervening weeks, chambers of commerce, travel associations and local municipalities have in one voice said it's a bad idea.

Having had some time over the summer to think about your plan, are you now prepared, as minister of highways for Ontario, to reconsider that position and to take back into the provincial highway system Highways 41 and 37?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member for the question. Obviously it is a concern for many municipalities around the province. In some ways, they might feel overwhelmed with what is happening. But I believe we in the Harris government are doing what is necessary to be done, that is, taking a look

at provincial highway infrastructure that truly serves a provincial purpose, and certainly highways that no longer serve that purpose should be dealt with by the municipalities.

We are doing that in such a way that municipalities are going to get adequate compensation, and if there isn't compensation attached to it, we will make sure that the standards of the transfer of those highways are going to be in the condition that they should be. We are doing things that I believe are right.

**Mr Conway:** Everyone who is on the other side of this says it's a bad idea. Highway 41, running from Lake Ontario at Napanee 200 kilometres northward to Pembroke at the Ottawa River, runs through a sparsely populated area that is almost entirely owned by the provincial government. No one in Renfrew, Lennox and Addington and Frontenac can conceive of what local interest is served by Highway 41.

You're going to meet tomorrow with the wardens of Renfrew, Lennox and Addington, Hastings and Frontenac counties who have got a counterproposal that would see you take back 41 and 37 into the provincial system for some other highways that they're prepared to take into their local and regional system. Are you prepared to consider that seriously and respond, not just to municipal leaders but to travel associations, chambers of commerce and a lot of sensible people who think your plan, particularly for the divestment of Highways 41 and 37, is unfair and insupportable?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I want to say to the honourable member that obviously highways are of great importance to Ontario, not only from a commercial aspect but also from a tourism aspect. I want to say to the member that, yes, I am meeting with the wardens and municipal leaders tomorrow and I am going to be going into this thing with a very open mind. I'm certainly going to listen to what they have to say. If there are fundamental opportunities within that compromise that we could both take advantage of the situation, obviously I will take that into consideration.

I want to again reassure the members that the transfers that have taken place have been done in a fair and consistent manner. Money has been attached to the transfers. Again, I want to say that whatever infrastructure needs to be addressed, at least we in the Harris government are making that effort. I don't want to give a shot to the two parties on the other side, but certainly in your term of government the same attention was not given by your respective governments.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. A small municipality in my constituency, the township of Plummer Additional, which is concerned about the downloading to municipalities, called the minister's office to request a meeting during the AMO conference this week. The response they received back from the minister's office was quite offensive. The information they were given was that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines would meet with the executive of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities and the mayors of the six major northern centres but that he did not have time to meet with small municipalities. The township of Plummer Additional was advised that their concerns should be forwarded to the executive of FONOM. I understand that the minister suggested they should meet with his parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton North.

Why is the Minister of Northern Development and Mines limiting his meetings during the AMO conference only to large municipalities and to the executive of FONOM?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I have no idea. I'll check out why that was told to the municipality. I met with FONOM and NOMA this morning, along with the six mayors of northern Ontario. As soon as I'm out of here in a few minutes, I'll go back down to AMO and meet with delegations until about 9 o'clock tonight from small municipalities right across northern Ontario. I'll check out why they were told that.

**Mr Wildman:** Since receiving this information, the reeve of the township of Plummer Additional has sent a memo to all the municipalities in Algoma district indicating the substance of his conversation with the minister's staff. The township of Plummer Additional has the same kinds of tax burdens, if not worse, as the large municipalities in northern Ontario as a result of the downloading. The township has done an analysis of the downloading and estimates that in 1998 there will be a $2,042 property tax increase to every household in the township.

Minister, how can you accept this kind of increase to the ratepayers of small municipalities in northern Ontario like the township of Plummer Additional? Can you tell them today that you will indeed change your schedule and meet with the reeve as he's attending AMO and discuss these figures and then come back to your government and say that this download has to be rethought?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** First of all, you didn't listen to the answer. I told you I am meeting with small municipalities in northern Ontario all day at AMO. Throughout the year I meet with municipal representatives as well. We've given FONOM and NOMA dollars to consult with all the municipal politicians and councils across northern Ontario and they've done a phenomenal job.

We were presented this morning with a report from FONOM and NOMA that they got input from all the small municipalities. You know full well that it's too premature to translate any of these rough calculations to household increases. We had a very positive meeting this morning with six mayors and FONOM and NOMA. FONOM and NOMA represent small municipalities.

This afternoon I expect to have more meetings with small municipalities, and they know this is a process where we've got some steps to take. We've got to work together to make sure there is no tax increase, to make sure that not only is the provincial government making efficiencies and making services better but the munic-

ipalities are given the tools to make services better without raising their taxes.

**1500**

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Solicitor General. As you've heard today and as I've expressed to you on numerous occasions, people in Hamilton are concerned about the aftermath of the Plastimet fire. They're concerned about the long-term effects and they're concerned about what can be done to ensure that such an occurrence doesn't happen again.

It's my understanding that your ministry is setting up a working group to respond to public concerns. Can you tell this House and members of my community, who are very concerned, who will be involved in this working group and what will they be doing?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I received the fire marshal's report on the incident last Wednesday and I want to commend the fire marshal and his staff for an excellent, timely and thorough work. The report contains 12 recommendations that will reduce the possibility of similar occurrences in the future. I'm told that the recommendations have already been endorsed by the Recycling Council of Ontario. The working group led by the office of the fire marshal with representatives from the ministries of environment and energy, health, labour and municipal affairs and housing, is being set up to translate these recommendations into action.

I'm quite satisfied that the report provides a game plan to address the issue. We're moving ahead and taking speedy action to ensure prevention and improve public safety.

**Mrs Ross:** I thank the Solicitor General for his response. This issue is a very serious concern. But the people in the community want to know when this group will be up and running, when they will take action and what their terms of reference will be.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I appreciate the member's concern and interest in this subject. The government has taken this situation very seriously and we're making good on our commitment to take swift and effective action.

I understand a steering committee will be formed this week. The steering committee will set out the precise expectations in terms of time lines and objectives for the working group and this information will be made public. It's worth noting that there is other work ongoing with respect to related fire safety concerns. Updates to the fire code are expected to be made this fall. Fire safety and prevention have been and will continue to be priorities for this government.

The key to long-term public health and safety is prevention, and I'm confident that the working group will focus their efforts appropriately.

## SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS AUX HÔPITAUX

**M. Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa-Est) :** My question is to the minister responsible for francophone affairs. Monsieur le Ministre, comme vous le savez, la Commission de restructuration des soins de santé a rendu public le sort de l'hôpital Montfort, et son rôle a été considérablement affaibli. Plusieurs personnes semblent dire que Montfort va devenir une coquille vide. C'est inacceptable.

Par contre, la formation de médecins francophones demeure un défi de taille pour l'Université d'Ottawa, la Cité collégiale, les médecins, pour établir et mettre en oeuvre ce réseau de services en français.

Pouvez-vous me dire, Monsieur le Ministre, quel sera votre rôle dans tout ça ? Quel sera le rôle de l'Office des Affaires francophones ? Quelle action allez-vous prendre ? Et ma dernière question : est-ce que le ministère de la Santé va présenter un nouveau plan de mise en oeuvre ?

**L'hon Noble A. Villeneuve (ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones) :** Il me fait plaisir d'expliquer tout simplement à mon collègue d'Ottawa-Est que l'hôpital Montfort demeure comme toujours. La chose est qu'il y a eu certains changements recommandés par la Commission de restructuration.

Le rôle du ministre des Affaires francophones est d'assurer que les services en français sont bel et bien disponibles non seulement à l'hôpital Montfort mais aux autres hôpitaux qui desservent une région désignée dans la région d'Ottawa. Quant aux recommandations de la Commission de restructuration, comme vous le savez, le gouvernement, les députés et même les membres du Conseil des ministres n'ont aucune influence sur la décision.

Alors, je veux tout simplement vous dire que ma responsabilité demeure les services en français comme nous les connaissions dans le passé.

**M. Grandmaître :** Votre réponse est inacceptable. Depuis le début vous vous cachez derrière cette commission parce que vous pensez que ces gens-là vont prendre la bonne décision ; vous allez simplement appuyer et votre attente dit que c'est satisfaisant.

À titre de ministre des Affaires francophones, vous avez un rôle d'ambassadeur pour représenter la communauté francophone. Cessez vos simagrées. Qu'est-ce que vous allez faire et quand allez-vous le faire, Monsieur le Ministre ?

**L'hon M. Villeneuve :** Je veux tout simplement réitérer que la responsabilité du ministre des Affaires francophones est d'assurer que les services et que la formation des médecins francophones se continuent.

Vous savez, c'est intéressant que le premier ministre, l'honorable Jean Chrétien, se dit très d'accord avec la décision. Mon collègue et votre collègue au niveau fédéral, l'honorable Don Boudria, nous dit la même chose. Il voit le rôle de l'hôpital Montfort se continuer. Alors moi, je suis d'accord avec mes collègues d'Ottawa.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I have a question of the Solicitor General. We know that Bill 136 has nothing to do with restructuring and everything to do with dismantling the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers. Quite frankly, the inclusion of police officers in Bill 136 demonstrates that as clearly as anything.

Specifically, what have you done to protect the collective bargaining rights of police officers, municipal and provincial, across this province in the context of Bill 136?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I'll refer this to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I would simply indicate to the member for Welland-Thorold that we have started to talk to the police, and I have indicated that we are quite prepared to respond to their concerns and make what changes would be necessary to accommodate those concerns.

**Mr Kormos:** It's unfortunate that the Solicitor General declines to take the opportunity to explain what he has done to protect the interests and rights of, in this case, police officers who are directly within his bailiwick. Not only am I disappointed, but I suspect that thousands of police officers across the province now have seen the true colours of this Solicitor General, that he cares not for the welfare of police and policing and quite frankly is prepared to deliver them up to the Minister of Labour just as public sector workers across the board — provincial, municipal and regional — are being delivered up and sacrificed in the context of Bill 136.

How can the government justify the inclusion of, let's say, police officers or firefighters in 136 if indeed they insist that the purpose of 136 is about restructuring rather than a direct attack on the bargaining rights of public sector workers?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would like to also share with you the fact that the Solicitor General and I have certainly been in communication, and all of the concerns that were brought forward to his attention he has shared with me. I would simply reiterate what I said in response to my first question. That is that as we look at the entire issue of restructuring and we put it into the appropriate context, we need to recognize that as we do have amalgamations, as we do have mergers of municipalities and hospitals and school boards, it is going to be absolutely necessary that there be the appropriate processes in place to deal with this restructuring to ensure that the needs of all employees, whether unionized or not, are appropriately addressed.

At the same time, we're taking a look at the arbitration system. As you probably know —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** — there has been an outstanding request to take a look at the arbitration system and somehow ensure that arbitrated settlements are dealt with in a more —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. New question.

## WATER CLEANUP

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, you are the right person with the right skills for a tough job, and I am confident that you will make the right decisions. I understand that after much deliberation, you announced last week, along with local Thunder Bay industry and Environment Canada, a major cleanup project of toxic waste in Thunder Bay harbour. Can you tell the House today more about this cleanup and its impact on the province?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** The ministry has been working for over 10 years on various remedial action plans across the Great Lakes. There are some 17 of them in existence. We have gone from the planning stage into the action stage, and last week we announced, along with the federal government and Abitibi, a $9.3-million cleanup in the Thunder Bay harbour of former toxic contamination done by Northern Wood Preservers. This cleanup will remove and treat the toxic sediments and thus improve the local water quality at Thunder Bay harbour.

We have spent in the past some $287 million on RAP-related activities. This project is going to have new innovative technologies and provide 200 jobs in the local area. I think it's a wonderful example of this province's commitment to clean up the Great Lakes.

**1510**

# PETITIONS

## ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Even though the Minister of Northern Development and Mines met with FONOM and NOMA this morning, they still believe this is an important petition.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to hear the petition.

**Mr Bartolucci:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has discontinued the northern support grant which has traditionally compensated the north for assessment deficiency and increased service costs; and

"Whereas the north is confronted with unique costs, severe weather conditions, higher prices, difficult terrain, higher levels of unemployment and a lower per capita income; and

"Whereas the provincial government has indicated its intention to eliminate all municipal unconditional grants, including the conditional road subsidy; and

"Whereas there has been no indication that the Ontario mining tax, which was implemented to fund northern support grants, will be eliminated or reduced;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fully support and endorse the position taken by the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities in its paper entitled Fairness and Equity for Our North, and that the province be requested to enact a new act to establish and provide, on a permanent basis, northern Ontario investments for northern municipalities to provide funds to maintain the basic infrastructure in terms of roads, water and sewer facilities, and provide funds to stimulate the social and economic development of the north; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, believe that the amount set aside for the northern development investments be equivalent to the amount set aside for the northern support grant in 1989, indexed on an annual basis."

I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in agreement with it.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** This is a petition signed by hundreds of people in the Toronto area regarding the Wellesley Central Hospital Staying Alive campaign.

"We, the undersigned, are vehemently opposed to the proposed closure of the Wellesley Central Hospital. We see this as cutting services, which will negatively affect the overall health of our community. We are deeply concerned about our future health care for treatment of acute illnesses and emergency care.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the only solution."

I am proud to have affixed my signature.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by 350 people. It reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's my privilege today to rise and read into the record a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Court of Appeal in Ontario has ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to ban going topless in public places."

I'm pleased to support this.

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on September 6, 1995, Anthony O'Brien Dudley George of Stony Point First Nations 43 was shot and killed by Acting Sergeant Kenneth Deane of the Ontario Provincial Police; and

"Whereas the Ontario Provincial Police met with a representative from the Premier's office before the massive police buildup that led to the death of Anthony O'Brien Dudley George; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario need to know what role the government played in ordering the Ontario Provincial Police to confront the Stony Point people with violence;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call a public inquiry into the Ontario Provincial Police shooting of Dudley George."

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a petition signed by over 150 people from my riding of Dovercourt and West Toronto in general, which reads as follows.

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

I agree with this petition and I've affixed my signature to it as well.

## GAMBLING

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Christians are called to a love of neighbour which includes a concern for the general wellbeing of society; and

"Whereas gambling does not meet basic criteria for socially responsible economic development; and

"Whereas it is unethical to offer gambling as a source of economic security to people on low incomes, poor communities and poorly financed sectors of our community such as culture and sport; and

"Whereas gambling proceeds provide an insecure source of income and are a regressive form of funding and should not be relied on for funding of social services such as health care or for other agencies; and

"Whereas there is a direct link between the higher availability of legalized gambling and incidence of addictive gambling (Macdonald and Macdonald, Pathological Gambling: The Problem, Treatment and Outcome, Canadian Foundation on Compulsive Gambling); and

"Whereas the damage of addiction to gambling in individuals is compounded by the damage done to families both emotionally and economically;

"Therefore, we the undersigned of Guthrie United Church, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario cease all moves to establish more gambling casinos in Ontario; and that the government cease all action to legalize video lottery terminals."

That's signed by myself and 26 people and I have identical ones from people in Elmvale, Phelpston and Midland.

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals and their numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province; and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario and black bears are a well-managed renewable resource; and

"Whereas bear hunting replaces natural mortality and reduces cannibalism among bears; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourist operators in northern Ontario is $30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign of misinformation and emotional rhetoric to ban bear hunting and to end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting."

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition here, and rather than read the whole petition, I would just summarize it, if that's allowed under the new rules as it was under the old standing orders.

The petition contains 425 signatures of residents of Peterborough county who are registering a vote of non-confidence in the government of the province of Ontario. They've signed their names to the petition because they're dissatisfied with the government's lack of meaningful public consultation as it restructures, eliminates and downloads the cost of vital services in this province, and they want their views presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

I am doing that and I'm supporting their petition by affixing my signature thereto.

**1520**

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals and their numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province; and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario and black bears are a well-managed renewable resource; and

"Whereas bear hunting replaces natural mortality and reduces cannibalism among bears; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourist operators in northern Ontario is $30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign to ban bear hunting and end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this petition.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the decision of closing Wellesley Central Hospital.

"We see this as cutting services which will negatively affect the overall health of our community.

"We are deeply concerned about our future health care for the treatment of acute illness and for emergency care.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the only solution."

This is 648 residents of the city of Toronto. I agree with the petitioners and I have signed my name to it as well.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I also have a petition.

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the decision of closing Wellesley Central and Women's College hospitals.

"These cuts will negatively affect the overall health of our community.

"We are deeply concerned about the future care of women, people living with HIV-AIDS and the many people in the densely populated neighbourhoods served by these hospitals.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the most reasonable solution, a solution that reduces costs and promotes the health of our community."

I am happy to affix my signature in support.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

I'm happy to affix my name as well.

## GAMBLING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It's signed by 20 residents of Algoma district and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there is much well-documented evidence that the social and economic disadvantages of government-sanctioned gambling far outweigh any apparent benefits;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, declare our opposition to the expansion of casinos and the installation of electronic gambling devices. Therefore, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to delay the implementation of Bill 75 and request that the province hold a binding referendum (in conjunction with the 1997 municipal elections) to determine the will of the people regarding the expansion of casinos and the installation of electronic gambling devices in Ontario."

I'm signing the petition.

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** A point of order, Madam Speaker, and in addition to a point of order, it's also a point of privilege. I would like to bring the following to your attention, bearing in mind a previous ruling by Speaker Stockwell with regard to information that ministries have publicized regarding what's happening here and when it's incorrect or before the fact.

On Thursday, August 21, the Ministry of Labour released a fact sheet which states that the review of Bill 99 will begin August 25. I would like to point out to you that on that very day that this was released, August 21, there was a subcommittee meeting of the standing committee on resources development, which is responsible for Bill 99. We agreed unanimously that the hearings for Bill 99 clause-by-clause would begin September 8.

The latest information I have, and it could have changed in the last few minutes, is that this information is still on the government's Web site on the Internet. I would like you to direct the Minister of Labour to correct this error.

I would also bring to your attention — and I'll be very brief; I'm not deliberately trying to take up any time here. But I want to leave with you also that subsequent to the subcommittee meeting on Thursday where we reached unanimous agreement about September 8 — the Libs, the government and the NDP all agreed — since then, the government has been trying to get a full meeting of the committee or a new meeting of the subcommittee because they want to change the date. For some reason, the minister or someone high up is not happy. That's why I have particular concern about this, because it suggests that somebody thought it was a fait accompli that the change was going to take place.

That's the point of privilege, wherein the government shouldn't be sending someone to a subcommittee meeting cutting a deal that's then going to be vetoed by the Minister of Labour. That's not the way this works. Speaker, I would ask you to do what it takes to put my rights and privileges as a member and that of my caucus correct again.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Hamilton Centre, if you could provide me with the documentation I saw you waving around, if you could have that sent to me, I'll take a look at it and reserve judgement and get back to the House later.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, barely on the same topic, because I was outside and just caught the tail end of that: My understanding is that there may have been a committee schedule with regard to Bill 99 — I believe this is the topic — but the subcommittee, as I understand, has met and I believe with the agreement of all three parties has

come up with a new schedule. Now, I may be wrong in that, but that's the information I'm getting. I don't know if somebody else substituted or what happened there, but I understand that the subcommittee did meet and a new schedule was arrived at. I don't know if that muddies the water or clarifies the situation.

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the government House leader attempting to help, but I hear my Liberal counterpart, who is the other member of the subcommittee, along with usually the parliamentary assistant for the government, saying that he wasn't at any meeting. I am the member of that committee. There were no substitutions. There were no changes. We have unanimous agreement of all three parties that it's September 8, and quite frankly, all the gymnastics in the world by the —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. What I would suggest, given the statements from the government House leader, is that the three people involved from each party get together and see if you can work it out. In the meantime, if you could provide me with the documentation, I will see if there is in fact any breaking of the rules or privileges. Thank you.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I would point out that under the new rules, the kind of meeting that you have just suggested might take place among the subcommittee members cannot take place today, because it's the same policy field as what is being debated in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** That may be so. I guess my suggestion is that if this can be worked out, if there is some confusion about what happened, please do so, but in the meantime I will endeavour, after I receive the documentation, to check that and see if there has been any breach of the rules. Is that okay?

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Another point of order, Madam Speaker: I would have raised this previously if I'd been here prior to the departure of the Honourable Chris Stockwell, Speaker of the assembly.

You will know that I raised a point of order on Thursday last with regard to the bill that was introduced on Thursday, a bill which was an omnibus bill amending 10 different pieces of legislation which, in my view, were not really related. The occupant of the Speaker's chair at the time indicated that the Speaker could and would review it. My friend the government House leader and also my friend the member for St Catharines spoke to the point of order. I was wondering if you could give us some information as to when you expect the Speaker to rule on this matter.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** If you could just give me a moment here.

Member for Algoma, I conferred with one of the table officers and I have no information as to when that ruling will be made. It's my understanding that the Speaker is still reviewing the documentation and will be getting back to the House shortly.

**1530**

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSITION STABILITY ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 VISANT À ASSURER LA STABILITÉ AU COURS DE LA TRANSITION DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mrs Witmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to provide for the expeditious resolution of disputes during collective bargaining in certain sectors and to facilitate collective bargaining following restructuring in the public sector and to make certain amendments to the Employment Standards Act and the Pay Equity Act / Projet de loi 136, Loi prévoyant le règlement rapide des différends lors des négociations collectives dans certains secteurs, facilitant les négociations collectives à la suite de la restructuration dans le secteur public et apportant certaines modifications à la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et à la Loi sur l'équité salariale.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I am very pleased to move second reading of Bill 136. The main principle of the Public Sector Transition Stability Act is simple and straightforward. It is to provide public sector employers and employees with the tools and processes to deal with the changes under way in the delivery of public services. It is a necessary and integral part of the restructuring of municipalities, school boards and hospitals as our government improves the accountability, the efficiency, the effectiveness and the affordability of public services.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't want to interrupt the minister particularly — I'm sure most members would want to hear what she has to say — but is there a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** This government is committed to redefining and restructuring the delivery of public services from who pays to who delivers and to providing improved services with more accountability at less cost to the taxpayer. The reforms we are introducing are long overdue. The status quo is no longer acceptable if the province of Ontario is to grow and prosper into the 21st century.

Obviously among those most affected by these necessary changes are the nearly 450,000 Ontarians who work for our cities and towns, in our hospitals and schools and in our police stations and firehalls, the dedicated men and women we all depend on for the collective public

services we too often take for granted and who make a significant contribution to the quality of life we enjoy in Ontario. For many of these individuals the restructuring process will mean different employers, perhaps different bargaining units and perhaps new collective agreements.

More than 3,300 collective agreements could be part of the transition as municipalities, school boards and health care facilities merge, amalgamate or reorganize. School boards alone will decrease from 129 to just 72 at the beginning of the year. By January 1, Ontario will have reduced its number of municipalities from 815 to about 650, and in Toronto alone the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended that the 39 hospitals currently operating in 46 separate facilities be reduced to 24 organizations operating 31 inpatient sites and four outpatient sites.

As you can appreciate, special processes are needed to ensure that these employees, whether they are unionized or not, are treated as fairly as possible as the changes unfold. Uncertainty over how it will happen must be minimized for both the employees and the employers. Bill 136 provides the framework for the transition. Bill 136 will create the new temporary processes and rules to deal with the volume of onetime, often complex labour relations issues that are likely to arise from mergers, amalgamations and restructuring.

Bill 136 will also provide often-asked-for permanent reforms to the current compulsory arbitration system in the police, fire and hospital sectors where strikes are not permitted. Bill 136, unlike the contract-nullifying social contract of the previous government, builds on Ontario's long-standing tradition of collective bargaining. Bill 136, contrary to the cries from the opposition benches, respects the tradition of collective bargaining.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Bull.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** It is based on the fact that employers, employees and unions can best find satisfactory solutions to the unique labour relations issues in their workplaces.

The reforms in Bill 136 will ensure that the workplace parties have the opportunity to do this during the restructuring process. We know that when the workplace parties bargain in good faith it is to everyone's advantage, since they are more committed to achieving the outcomes.

However, if, as may be the case in some instances, the workplace parties are unable to resolve these issues despite their very best efforts, Bill 136 provides the legal and institutional framework to solve them in a timely, fair and reasonable manner. After all, we are dealing here with the delivery of very important public sector services, services the taxpayers of Ontario rely on and depend on being delivered efficiently and effectively.

It is incumbent upon all of us to see that the uncertainty inherent in the restructuring process is minimized — minimized for the employers, the employees and the recipients of those services, the taxpayers of Ontario who pay for them. That is the principle behind Bill 136.

Most of its provisions are of a temporary nature to deal with the onetime, unique problems restructuring will raise in many bargaining units across Ontario. There is no hidden agenda. There is no elimination of successor rights. There is no unilateral removal of bargaining rights. These are concrete, specific provisions for assisting public sector employers and employees in dealing with the restructuring of our public sector services. We believe the provisions are fair and balanced for all parties.

The modernization of Ontario's public sector service delivery is under way. Bill 136 is a necessary part of the restructuring.

Before I deal with some of the specifics of Bill 136 as they now stand, let me say that they are not etched in stone. The principle, yes; the specifics, no. If there are suggestions, from whatever quarter, to improve the bill, we are more than ready to listen and consider them. As you well know, we are presently in discussions with the police, and I have extended an invitation to the labour leaders and to Mr Wilson in order that we can meet and also consider any suggestions they may have.

I hope I will hear some suggestions, both as the bill is examined in committee and in the ongoing discussions that are now in progress and future discussions. Fairness to public sector employers, employees and taxpayers demands that a consistent set of balanced rules be in place to smooth the transition to the restructuring of government services.

**1540**

I would like to turn to Bill 136. It will actually create two new acts. The first is the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act. This will establish the temporary Labour Relations Transition Commission, and it will deal with the high volume of complex labour issues that may arise as the result of the school board, hospital and municipal mergers and amalgamations. However, it may not be necessary for the parties to access the commission that is provided here if they can solve their own labour relations issues.

As I said before, our legislation is quite different from the Social Contract Act. As you know, that act intervened in the collective bargaining process. In fact, there was an override of existing agreements and in effect it forced most employers to impose wage rollbacks and social contract days. Furthermore, the social contract, unlike our legislation, was passed with minimal consultations with affected parties and was presented as a fait accompli. In fact, the Social Contract Act received first reading on June 14, 1993, and royal assent less than one month later, on July 8, 1993. That's less than one month for debate and passage, and it was imposed despite strong opposition from organized labour and without any public hearings.

By contrast, Bill 136 will be the subject of public hearings and, as I indicated before, we look forward to the consultation. Bill 136 also will not restrict the freedom of parties to resolve collective bargaining issues and negotiate their own collective agreements; in fact it encourages the parties to use negotiation as the first and best option. However, if that is not possible, the

commission, with its temporary mandate which ends on December 31, 2001, will be available should either party wish to use it as a fair and expeditious vehicle for resolving outstanding labour relations issues.

When an amalgamation or a merger does take place, we're going to have two or more workplaces coming together. These workplaces obviously will have operated under different collective agreements with different terms of employment and probably they will have been represented by different bargaining agents. As well, some of the issues we'll be facing are the mergers of unionized and non-unionized workplaces. In order that we treat all the individuals fairly, there will be a need for a consistent set of rules to assist the parties in arriving at a solution to the various labour relations questions that may arise. For example, what will happen when members of two or more bargaining units are brought together? What will be the size and shape of the new bargaining unit? Which union will represent the members of a new bargaining unit when you bring two or more unions together? What happens when unionized and non-unionized workers are combined? Which collective agreement will apply during the transition? How will seniority be determined?

In all of these cases the responsibility will be on the workplace parties — the employers, the employees and the unions — to develop their own solutions through negotiation. However, it is only if they are unable to come to an agreement that the Labour Relations Transition Commission has the power to resolve the issue. For example, if a single union does not represent a substantial majority of employees or if the unions are unable to agree which union will represent employees when two or more come together, the transition commission will be able to determine the matter by ordering a mandatory secret ballot vote. Again, this will enhance workplace democracy in the choice of a union.

Currently under section 69 of the Labour Relations Act, the Ontario Labour Relations Board has the discretion to make an order stating which union will represent employees in a newly unified workplace or it can order a secret vote by the employees. Bill 136, however, will require the Labour Relations Transition Commission to order a mandatory secret ballot vote by the employees if there is not agreement on union representation or if no single union has the required majority of employees in the new workplace.

I'd just like to review what could happen in the instance of a majority. When two unions are involved, in order to be the representative, one union must have at least 75% of the employees. In the case of the amalgamation of three or more unions, the union must have at least 60% of the employees to become a union representing the employees.

What happens if we have an instance where we bring together employees who are non-unionized and unionized and we have at least 40% of these employees who are not represented by a union? In this instance there will be the option of including non-union representation on the secret ballot. As you know, this 40% figure is consistent with the Labour Relations Act certification and decertification provisions where a vote is conducted by the board when at least 40% of a workplace indicates a desire to either become unionized or to decertify the union. So in an amalgamation or a merger, they will be able to also determine, if more than 40% are non-unionized, whether they want to continue with union representation.

Let's take a look at the issue of seniority, because it's going to be imperative that we protect the seniority of each and every employee, whether they're unionized or not. We must ensure fair treatment, and the act requires that for seniority purposes equal recognition is given to the relevant years of service of both unionized and non-unionized employees. The new workplace will also require a temporary collective agreement. Bill 136 provides for a composite collective agreement, which means it can be made up of all the previous collective agreements and those can temporarily apply. This means the employees will temporarily continue to be covered by their previous collective agreements even though they may be in a new bargaining unit. Employees who were not represented by a union before the reorganization will continue to be covered by their previous contract of employment during this interim period.

Once the composite agreement is in place, the employer and union can choose to continue with that agreement for up to one year, or, depending on the needs of the workplace, the employer and union can agree to a new collective agreement based on one of the collective agreements that existed before the amalgamation or merger. However, another option available is that the parties can jointly ask the Labour Relations Transition Commission to choose one of the existing agreements to apply. At this stage, either the union or employer can choose to begin the process of negotiating a new collective agreement by giving notice to bargain.

If such notice is given and the parties would normally have the right to strike or lockout, either party now has 30 days to indicate that if negotiations are unsuccessful, the dispute will be settled by the new Dispute Resolution Commission rather than resorting to a strike or lockout. This alternative was put in place to ensure that disruptions of service to the taxpayer during this period of restructuring in the public sector are minimized. However, I should remind the members that if neither the employer nor the union wishes to exercise this option, the right to strike or lockout still remains.

**1550**

Let me remind members that the option is available under current legislation. Recently, the 4,200 civic workers in Ontario's second-largest municipality, Ottawa-Carleton, opted for binding arbitration in contract negotiations, thus themselves forgoing the right to strike. I don't remember anyone inside or outside the union claiming that their bargaining rights were taken away.

Let's not forget that more than half the broader public sector employees, for example, the police, the fire and the hospital sector, don't presently have the right to strike. Once the first post-amalgamation or merger collective agreement is reached, the provisions of Bill 136 will no

longer apply and the parties will revert to the traditional collective bargaining process.

Labour leaders had indicated prior to the passage of Bill 136 that they were concerned about the elimination of successor rights and overrides of collective agreements. We listened. Our legislation does not eliminate successor rights and it does not override collective agreements.

As well, we responded to their concerns about contracting out. If this is to occur, it is an option that is going to be up for negotiation between the workplace parties.

We have also recognized the uniqueness of the construction trade unions. We know they bargain under a different process, and so my officials have been consulting with those parties in the public sector construction industry regarding the application of this act to the construction trade unions, which have construction bargaining rights in the broader public sector. I'm optimistic that they can reach their own conclusion and outcomes.

I'd like to turn now to the second act in Bill 136, the Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act. This act will permanently reform arbitration in the fire, police and hospital sectors, where strikes and lockouts are not permitted today.

**Mr Christopherson:** Shame on you, Elizabeth.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** In these sectors, binding arbitration is used when the parties are unable to reach an agreement. In fact, I just referred to the fact that Ottawa-Carleton opted for that option.

**Mr Christopherson:** Fair arbitration.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please, member for Hamilton Centre.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Almost half of the employees in the broader public sector currently don't have the right to strike. We're talking about 25,000 police officers in local forces and the OPP. We're talking about the nearly 10,000 full-time firefighters and the 192,000 workers in the hospitals and nursing homes.

What this act will do is to create a permanent Dispute Resolution Commission to promote and encourage negotiated settlements and resolve disputes should those negotiations fail in these sectors. This is what has been asked for.

**Mr Christopherson:** Your handpicked cronies.

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister, take your seat a moment. Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order, please. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** This new process will address the concerns that have been expressed for many years and will ensure that the system is more accountable to the taxpayer as well.

Concerns about the present arbitration system have been raised in a number of studies, including a 1994 study by Dr Joseph Rose of McMaster University's faculty of business titled The Complaining Game: How Effective is Compulsory Interest Arbitration? Dr Rose's study found that arbitrated wages settled in Ontario from 1982 to 1990 exceeded private sector settlements achieved through collective bargaining by up to 2% per year. A study done in 1992 by well-known labour researcher John O'Grady titled Arbitration and its Ills found similar results.

In addition to these studies, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and two hospital inquiry commissions have called for the kind of changes to arbitration that we are now proposing in Bill 136.

As well, in past years, both employers and unions have complained about the long delays in the current arbitration process. Currently it takes on average three times longer to settle an agreement in non-strike sectors than in the private sector. Since the beginning of 1995, it has taken an average of four months to settle agreements in the private sector. During the same time period, it has taken more than 12 months to achieve the same results in the non-strike sector using interest arbitration.

On average, arbitrated police agreements are concluded approximately 13 months after the expiry of the previous agreement. In the fire sector the figure is even longer, 20 months, and in the hospital sector agreements are finalized nearly two years after the expiry of a contract. This stands in stark contrast to the private sector where, as I indicated, it is all concluded within four months on average. This means that in some cases the employers and unions are learning the final result of an arbitration after the term of the arbitrated contract is over. As I indicated, it may be 13 months, 20 months or two years.

As well, both unions and employers in the non-strike sectors agree that the present system encourages employers and unions to rely on arbitrators to make decisions rather than seriously attempting to negotiate their own agreements. They would prefer a system that does encourage more face-to-face negotiations. Both parties agree that since arbitrators often tend to split the difference in their awards, there really is little incentive to negotiate.

To deal with these concerns and to encourage unions and employers to negotiate settlements, the Dispute Resolution Commission will have the ability to use a number of alternative dispute resolution methods, including final offer selection or mediation-arbitration.

Under final offer selection, the employer and union would submit their final offer to a decision-maker, who then chooses one of the two offers. Final offer selection could be used for the entire agreement or on an issue-by-issue basis, or any other way the commission believes appropriate. This method strongly encourages the parties to be very realistic in the final offer they put on the table.

Another method available to the commission is mediation-arbitration. In this situation, the person appointed by the commission acts as a mediator, assisting the parties to negotiate as much of the collective agreement as possible and then deciding the remaining outstanding issues.

The Dispute Resolution Commission will consist of a number of commissioners headed by a chief commissioner. Where appropriate, the chief commissioner may also appoint side persons who participate in the decision-making process, and they would be nominees of unions and employers.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Conrad Black; that's who we'll have.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please, member for St Catharines.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** For both the Dispute Resolution Commission and the Labour Relations Transition Commission, the government will be seeking to appoint people with experience. The task at hand requires experienced and fairminded individuals.

The government today already appoints arbitrators where employers and unions cannot agree on an arbitrator to settle contracts in the police, fire and hospital sectors. It is important to note that employers and employees would not have to use the Dispute Resolution Commission. They would still have the option of having their dispute resolved through private arbitration if they both agree.

In addition to its permanent powers to resolve labour disputes in non-strike sectors, the DRC will also have a temporary mandate to administer a binding dispute resolution process during a first-contract negotiation following an amalgamation or a merger in other parts of the broader public sector. As I mentioned earlier, this power can only be exercised at the request of either party.

Bill 136 adopts the provisions of the Ontario Labour Relations Act that require both parties to bargain in good faith and make a serious effort to reach a negotiated settlement. Both parties will be required to go through the normal conciliation process before they can even apply to the Dispute Resolution Commission; that is, they will be required to have an outside party try to assist them in reaching an agreement.

If either party applies to the DRC before they have seriously bargained, the chief commissioner could order both sides back to the bargaining table. It is only after all other avenues are exhausted that the commission will step in and make an order to resolve the dispute.

**1600**

By creating greater incentives for the parties to settle disputes themselves, this new process will not only encourage more effective negotiation, it will also protect taxpayers against unnecessary disruptions of public services through strikes or lockouts during this transitional period.

When compared to other jurisdictions, our legislation enhances the principle of collective bargaining by ensuring that the parties have an opportunity to determine outcomes that suit the unique needs of their workplaces.

In the past six years, I might note, there have been 29 separate pieces of legislation passed in Canada affecting public sector labour relations with a view to restructuring government. Governments across Canada in recent years have largely chosen to implement legislation that determines collective bargaining outcomes, either through direct collective agreement overrides or by extending collective agreements.

For example, if you take a look at both British Columbia and Saskatchewan, they have enacted regulations that determined new bargaining units and also determined which union would represent employees in those bargaining units. In both cases, the government didn't provide the parties with a process to negotiate their own solutions when determining new bargaining unit structures, as we have done. Neither government conducted representation votes or allowed the parties to achieve a negotiated solution as to which union will represent which employees. That determination was made by government regulation. In that process, a number of unions lost bargaining rights.

It is clear, therefore, that our approach is very different. By enshrining the ability to negotiate solutions independently, we continue to respect the principle of collective bargaining and we continue to allow the parties the primary role in determining collective agreements that are appropriate to their unique workplaces.

I now want to turn to two other aspects of the legislation. To facilitate restructuring and to address some other concerns, we are introducing some amendments to the Pay Equity Act. Bill 136, if approved, will allow for more flexibility in establishing pay equity adjustments where there is a sale of a business, including an amalgamation.

The current Pay Equity Act requires a new employer in an amalgamated or newly purchased organization to develop a new pay equity plan if the previous plan is no longer deemed appropriate. For example, if two municipalities are merged, a new plan may be required if the old plans are no longer appropriate. For example, you may have different wage rates and yet have similar jobs, so obviously there's going to be a need to take a look at the whole issue of pay equity because different adjustments have been made within the different organizations.

Currently, today, the law does not allow the new plan to lower any previous adjustments, even where that would be more rational and appropriate in the new organization. Under the amendments in our bill, the prohibition on reducing the pay equity adjustment in these cases will be removed.

Bill 136 will also provide that in the broader public sector pay equity adjustments will have to be made back to the time an employee made a complaint, a union tried to negotiate a pay equity plan or a pay equity plan was posted, rather than back to January 1, 1990, as is now the case.

These amendments are going to clarify the responsibilities of the new employer, following an amalgamation or a merger, for making these payments.

Bill 136 also clarifies that people who provide private home day care under the provisions of the Day Nurseries Act are not considered employees under the Pay Equity Act and, as such, are not eligible for pay equity adjustments. These are individuals who are contracted by some municipalities and other agencies to provide day care in their own homes. It was never intended that these self-employed, private home day care providers be considered employees under the act.

Finally, Bill 136 will allow us to take the steps to wind down the employee wage protection program. This is the very last program in Canada that uses taxpayer funds to

cover the employers' financial obligations to their employees. Unfortunately, this program has not lived up to its expectations. When the program was established, it was expected that a large portion of money would be recovered either from the employers who had refused to pay or from the directors of bankrupt or insolvent companies. Unfortunately, this has never happened. The total recovery stands at just over $8.5 million on government payouts of approximately $200 million.

**Mr Christopherson:** So let the workers get stiffed. Let your buddies go bankrupt and let the workers get stiffed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** The member for Hamilton Centre.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The poor collections record is partly the result of actions that were taken by the previous government. It was the previous government which disbanded the collections unit of the employment practices branch and they placed the onus for both enforcement and collections on the employment standards officers in the field. As a result, when that was done by the previous government, collections dropped approximately 25%.

However, we want to ensure that these employees receive the compensation that they deserve from their former employers and we are going to continue to press the federal government to amend —

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** — the federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act to provide a higher creditor status to employees.

Even though I first wrote to industry minister Manley in August 1995 on this issue, and even though I received the support of the provincial and territorial labour ministers from across Canada at the federal-provincial labour conference in February of this year, the federal government has refused to consider the interest of these employees and change the legislation. Nevertheless, we will continue to press for improved status of employee claims under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

In conclusion, if Bill 136 is passed by the House, it will promote and encourage a timely, fair and orderly transition to a more efficient and effective public service. It will also encourage the workplace parties to cooperatively resolve their issues through collective bargaining. However, if they are unable to do so, there will be a process in place to ensure that the issues are resolved in a fair, timely and expeditious manner and also a process that treats each employee, whether unionized or not, fairly.

Bill 136 builds on Ontario's tradition of collective bargaining and is consistent with our government's balanced approach to collective bargaining. We have not intervened to impose a solution on any major public sector dispute such as the ones in the Ontario public service, Ontario Hydro or the Toronto Transit Commission. Instead, we have continued to put in place fair and balanced processes to encourage the workplace parties to negotiate their own solutions.

We expect, as the amalgamations and the mergers take place, that the workplace parties will continue to bargain in good faith as they have in the past and they will continue to arrive at agreements that will benefit everyone in the new workplace.

I want to make it clear that our government looks forward to receiving constructive comments from all parties on how we can improve Bill 136. We want to be certain that the legislation meets the needs of all concerned and that it will promote the smooth transition to the improved public services that is required. We want legislation that will ensure that every individual in the workplace is treated fairly and we must ensure that Ontarians continue to receive the public services they require during this time period.

*Applause.*

**1610**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I'll wait for the applause to die down over there when I get up, but I want to say that this legislation represents yet another attack on people who are somewhat vulnerable in our society and it intrudes in areas where it doesn't have to intrude.

I met with members of the police force in the Niagara region the other day who clearly made the point that police officers should not be included in this legislation, that they are in fact included in their own legislation, that collective bargaining has already worked well between police officers and the police departments for which they work. For the life of me, I don't know why this government is bringing the police forces of this province under this particular act.

I want to say again that everyone should recognize that the government will be able to get this bill through in record time. The government, beginning today, has new rules. Premier Harris has forced through this Legislature, through the overwhelming majority of members in this House who are Conservative, new rules which will severely restrict debate on this legislation, which will allow the government to get it through very rapidly so that there can be a minimum of discussion not only in this House but in the public, so that people will quickly have forgotten about it. In fact, they could get this bill through very quickly this week.

I'm also concerned when I hear the minister say that the employee wage protection provisions are being ended. This was a positive program. She joins with her fellow ministers who point the finger somewhere else whenever there's responsibility but are large as life to take credit when there's any credit to be taken. It's time that this minister and this government took their responsibility to protect workers in this province and to maintain that program so that many people are not left out in the cold as a result of bankruptcies that take place in businesses.

**Mr Christopherson:** I don't think there's anything that enrages me and a whole lot of other people who are watching this today more than listening to this minister on behalf of this government talk about fair and balanced. What the hell do you know about fair and balanced when you take a look at your track record of labour legislation? Every single piece of legislation and regulation that

you've passed has been an attack on workers' standard of living, an attack on their rights, an attack on things that they worked for and earned and fought for over decades. That's your track record and you still have the audacity to stand there and say, "Fair and balanced, we care about everybody, we want to be fair." It's not the truth. The fact of the matter is that the labour movement and the workers they represent, you perceive —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. You have accused the minister of not telling the truth and I don't accept that. Would you please withdraw that?

**Mr Christopherson:** I withdraw my unparliamentary language.

The reality of what you have done is to take away at every turn — and I've got to believe, Minister, and I say this so — I was going to say "sincerely." I don't know if I can reach that word in dealing with the emotions I have in listening to what you're doing. But how do you live with yourself on the pay equity part of this? First of all, it's got nothing at all to do with anything else in 136. How do you do that as one of the few female representatives in that government? How do you stand there and support and promote and push this through?

When you talk about the employee wage protection plan and you talk about the fact they haven't yet been able to get all the money back from the employers, what you're saying is those workers are out of luck. They don't get their severance pay, their termination, their wages, their vacation pay. It's all gone. We put in place a program that said workers don't stand at the end of the line behind banks any more. They stand at the front of the line, the government will use its clout to get the money. This is a disgrace.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a real honour for me to rise in response to the minister's statement today on Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act. Our minister today very clearly has invited every Ontarian to participate in this debate and she's clearly open to suggestions and meaningful, positive dialogue.

All of the members of this House are concerned that everyone has an opportunity for input, and on several points in the remarks today by the minister it's very clear that there is an opportunity for every Ontarian to have input.

During restructuring we all need stability. The workers of Ontario most of all need stability. What is this stability? It's in the public sector. In our municipalities in the restructuring, we as a government are responsible and workers are responsible to ensure the delivery of service. That's what this stability in transition act is all about. Let's call it what it is.

If I wanted to respond more positively, I would say to the minister — I'm reading a memo dated July 24, addressed to Gordon F. Wilson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour; just a few comments from the letter to let the people of Ontario know that what you read in the press isn't always the case of what is really going on. They have a job to do to be seen to be opposing everything we do. I'm reading a memo from our Minister of Labour.

"I am writing in response to your letter," that's Mr Wilson's letter, "to the Premier of July 21." That's communication. "I was disappointed when, earlier this week, you declined to meet with me." This is communication. Imagine the optics of it all. What if they were trying to play the positive role and recognized that change is important? Our minister clearly announced today that this is going to be a progressive bill to ensure stability in Ontario, and everyone has input, despite what you may read.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I find the minister's comments to be rather interesting to say the least as we read through this. What she's really saying is, "Ontario will really work and really work well if we just give managers the ability to say, 'Do it, this is the way it's going to be.'" There's no real input from anybody other than the manager.

That sounds very good in theory. You can keep your costs down, you can push people around, you can make anything happen if you want to; at least that's what the minister thinks. The problem with that is that in the real world it doesn't work.

In my constituency I've had chats with policemen, with others who are affected, hospital workers, all these kinds of folks who will be affected by having their ability to bargain in good faith with their employer taken away because they're going to impose first contracts and restructuring.

It's nice to impose things. It makes it real easy. It's a simple solution, but it doesn't work. What do you think the morale will be like in these organizations after the government — in essence, when you boil this all down, that's what's going to happen in this bill: Somebody is just going to dictate how things will be done. And do you know what? It doesn't work. We all know it doesn't work.

We are in for a period of chaos in our public services in this province and it can be laid right at the feet of the Harris government. The deterioration in our public services will continue. People will not be able to get the kind of services they have been entitled to in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, you have two minutes.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I appreciate the comments I've heard from members of all three parties. I would just like to reiterate one more time that the objective of the bill is to provide employers and employees with the tools and processes that may be needed to deal with the changes under way in the delivery of public services.

However, what this bill really does, first and foremost, is to continue to encourage collective bargaining to take place between the workplace parties. The workplace parties will only be using the commissions that are being established when they cannot negotiate solutions themselves. I want to repeat, this bill encourages collective bargaining, and if they cannot resolve the issues, there is a process in place that will allow the issues to be resolved in a timely and expeditious manner.

I would also indicate to the members, particularly opposite, that we are extremely interested in hearing from

both of the opposition parties, as well as the stakeholders who are impacted by the bill, as to their concerns and as to how those concerns and issues could be addressed.

As I mentioned before, there is a principle behind the bill and we will be moving forward according to the principle, but if you have some changes you would like us to consider, we are certainly quite amenable to giving serious consideration to those changes.

**1620**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I've listened very carefully to what the minister has said today, and through the course of my remarks I will address a number of points she has raised. I must say, though, at the outset that the minister is an excellent communicator. She has a very solid form of communication that sounds logical. If someone wasn't familiar with this legislation, they would certainly think this is the most logical piece of legislation anywhere. But I would suggest much of this is not just from this minister. The minister isn't alone and I'll talk about that in short order.

I must say that this legislation before us is extremely important to the province and, as the minister has said, it is a marked departure in the province's history of labour relations, let alone the whole manner in which the province conducts its own affairs. Sadly enough, in my opinion it is neither a positive nor a productive change; it is regressive. That's been the pattern of much legislation in the past two years and, in my opinion, this legislation is no different.

This legislation is part and parcel of this government's whole restructuring exercise, the downloading of services on to the municipal tax base and the massive cuts to public services such as the recent closures of hospitals across Ontario. The Minister of Labour has brought in what has been coined the amalgamation hammer, the tool for prying open collective bargaining agreements in Ontario's public service, and now the die has been cast. But it was not moulded with the extended hands of cooperation; it's been forged with the fists of confrontation.

With Bill 136 the stage has been set and the government has taken its position on the battlefield, prepared for what it knows only too well will be confrontation. I believe Mike Harris has been looking forward to this day to take on what he considers is his ultimate opposition: the labour movement. But I believe he's mistaken, because his ultimate opposition will be the dedicated workers who deliver public services: nurses, police officers, firefighters, educators, day care workers, garbage collectors, librarians, and of course those people who rely on those services, the Ontario voter and taxpayer.

The public is beginning to see beyond the Mike Harris smokescreen which blocks out an agenda driven by a premature tax cut paid for on the backs of hardworking Ontarians and the social fabric of this province.

This legislation is not about union leaders as Mike Harris would like everyone to think; in reality it's about ordinary working people and the public services we all rely on. Today it is the public servants, tomorrow it will be the teachers, and the day after that it could be every other worker in Ontario.

The only way Mike Harris knows how to manage labour relations is through provocation and bullying. Last year Mike Harris provoked a strike with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union as its chosen negotiating strategy. Mike Harris only sat down at the table to negotiate with doctors after the doctors threatened a withdrawal of services. Now Mike Harris is extending unilateral control over the collective bargaining process to get at the contracts of hundreds of thousands of working Ontarians. This is unfair and it's heavy-handed. Regardless of the politics at play, it is a poor way to handle labour relations.

The real question before us in my mind is, what is the rationale for this legislation? What is really the rationale? I submit to you that the real rationale is as simple as the premature tax cut, because money is what is behind all this. Everything this government has done from day one and intends to do until the end of its mandate comes down to the responsibilities and the search for money as a result of lost revenue from its tax cut.

We've seen so many ways to date how this premature tax cut has put our health care system at risk with the closure of hospitals; how it's put education at risk through massive funding cuts, resulting in the elimination of programs — junior kindergarten, adult education — and increased class sizes. We will see this happening in the next two or three weeks, increased class sizes. Teachers that I speak to are beginning to know what the enrolment is in their schools. It's also put job creation at risk, creating a youth unemployment problem of epidemic proportions.

Ultimately, it affects our economy and adds a risk there as well, which was made abundantly clear a few months ago by the fact that the province's credit rating remained downgraded; the province's credit rating will stay at less than AAA, at AA.

Now we see the impact it is having on labour relations in the province. Seldom before have we seen this province so polarized. It has pushed the province to the point of effectively suspending the right to strike, which workers in this province legitimately hold, except for workers deemed to work in essential service areas.

These are some of the major issues at stake in Ontario today and to which Bill 136 will contribute. The minister says the legislation is designed to prevent employee relations from exploding into chaos as the government closes hospitals, merges school boards, municipalities, police and fire services.

I say that's nonsense. This province has gone through restructuring in the past. It has seen municipalities, school boards, police and fire services merged in an orderly manner under the existing system of labour relations. Now the government wants to throw away that experience and that body of knowledge and impose costly new structures which will serve the government's desperate need to find money, not the quality of services for people in Ontario.

The question is, who created the chaotic mess in the first place? The government created the chaos as a

diversion away from its real agenda. The Ottawa Citizen had an editorial in which it talked about the government's need to find a scapegoat. In this case it's the workers. You see, this legislation is needed because invariably the workers and their unions are going to cause problems — so the government wants the public to believe.

Well, I have news for the government: The collective agreement process works fairly well the way it is, with its own set of balanced incentives. For example, some 85% of fire sector collective agreements are freely negotiated. When not freely negotiated, the present system allows for an independent arbitrator, agreed to by both employers and employees, to come to a settlement. I believe that's the best process when dealing with essential workers. If the right to strike is curtailed, it must be replaced with independent and impartial arbitration to determine employees' wages, benefits and working conditions.

The Police Association of Ontario is questioning why this legislation is being applied to their sector, given their record. I quote:

"Police associations have negotiated new contracts in 55 out of 99 police forces so far without the need for arbitration. On average, only 10% of police agreements go to arbitration. There have only been four arbitration awards to date. Many police services throughout Ontario were restructured a few years ago, and we think the regional police model has been very successful in most areas, if not all. Minor restructuring has been occurring where small police forces merge or disband in favour of OPP policing, and these have gone smoothly."

So why, I ask, are the police included in this legislation where there hasn't been, is not now and is unlikely to be a problem?

**Mr Christopherson:** On two points of order, Speaker: First, I believe it's the tradition in this place that either the minister or the parliamentary assistant would be in the House at all times during debate of a bill. Second, I don't believe we have quorum.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would you please check if there is a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present.

**1630**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr Patten:** I was saying the question that the police are asking is why they are included in this legislation. That's of course a very important question and one that the police say the minister has failed to address. The record is one of productive labour relations and the evidence does not support the government's contention that its new commissions are needed to ensure a smooth transition for the government's restructuring.

The police know why and I'll quote from the Police Association of Ontario, which "views the legislation as the government's way of fixing the game in favour of the municipalities' administrations. Without strikes and little arbitration, contracts have been settled through fair and reasonable negotiations in a timely manner. So if there hasn't been a problem, why does the government feel it has to intervene, if not to favour the municipal negotiators?"

This is how the people who protect our communities feel about the legislation. They say it isn't needed. Here's another point raised by the police, and I quote, "While the government suggests they are temporary measures, the changes they are advancing for policing are permanent." Let me repeat that. The changes as the police see them in the dispute mechanism are permanent changes. In fact, this is the case for all essential workers who do not have the right to strike. The government isn't doing this to ease the transition of their massive restructuring. They are doing it to remove all independence from the decision-making process.

Since the end of the social contract, the public sector has negotiated numerous collective agreements with few going to arbitration and only a half-dozen ending up in a strike situation. This hardly sounds like chaos to me, and from a labour relations perspective, the changes that will occur under the current round of mergers and amalgamations pale in comparison.

What is the government afraid of? Why are they changing the arbitration process to one that they will invariably control through cabinet appointments and that is tied to money-saving targets?

That process has been discredited in the past. Some members of this House may remember the dying days of the Conservative government of Frank Miller during which the Solicitor General John Williams tried to force an arbitrator on the Metropolitan Toronto Police contract dispute. Some members here remember that.

The reaction to that was swift and it was firm. Labour relations came to a halt, the police refused to participate in the arbitration process and undertook a job action to protest this political intervention. The dispute was only resolved when a system of interest arbitration was put in place with a truly independent arbitrator agreed upon by both the police and the police services board.

I say to the minister, it didn't work then and I don't believe it will work now. We as a province have been down that path and the reaction from the Police Association of Ontario is as firm now as it was then. When the minister says she's listening to the police, then I hope she does carefully because that's what they're saying. That particular action did not help labour relations. What did it do? It disrupted labour relations. But the government is determined to go down that path again because it seems to me its only goal is to get money out of public service contracts.

The government created chaos with its tax cut and its massive downloading. Now they have put together a legislative package to address the chaos that they created. It doesn't repair the damage. Instead it guides the chaos to its goal of controlled service reductions that will result in a diminished quality of service. I say government is not a business as members of the government party like to think and like to say; nor can the provision of social and public

services be driven solely by the bottom line. It is a process that began with this government with Bill 26 and is being completed with this legislation and Bill 142 and Bill 152. There is a fine line between what society as a collective is prepared to pay for and what is required for that collective to function for the betterment of the society. Unfortunately the government has crossed that line.

True to form, the government is continuing its pattern of heavy-handedness. The government says that it wants the collective bargaining process to work. But it's doomed to fail under the massive restructuring that Mike Harris is imposing on the people of this province, a province built on cooperation and built by people working together.

The minister argues that Bill 136 is needed as the government moves towards restructuring school boards, municipalities and the health care system. She goes to great lengths to say that the legislation does not eliminate the right to strike, that it does not eliminate successor rights. It is only there if needed, if there is an impasse. But as we know, the legislation is much more than that. While Bill 136 purports to support the collective bargaining process, the path to confrontation and arbitration has been set and it will no doubt be a path well worn by cash-starved provincial, regional and municipal service bodies seeking to maintain the quality of services in the face of provincial downloading and funding cuts.

The minister would have us believe that the purpose of the legislation is, as she would say, "...to ensure employees are treated fairly, service disruptions are minimized and labour relations are resolved in a timely manner." What she means is that the legislation ensures that the government gets its own way. It all comes down to the government imposing its agenda on the people of Ontario.

Changes to bargaining units or bargaining rights resulting from restructuring must be based on recognized labour principles and must be determined through a democratic, open, fair and independent process. Why are we not allowing the Ontario Labour Relations Board to determine transitional bargaining units and bargaining agents, issues arising from restructuring, rather than creating a duplicative transition commission which will have no credibility or no legitimacy, certainly, to the working people of Ontario?

This may require providing the Ontario Labour Relations Board with additional authority to make necessary determinations concerning bargaining units, bargaining rights and seniority. However, establishing a new body that effectively usurps the Ontario Labour Relations Board, which has over the past 53 years of experience and acceptability in dealing with such labour relations issues, is deemed to be preferable by the Harris government.

The Labour Relations Transition Act is triggered by an amalgamation or restructuring which results in the discontinuance of what the act calls the "predecessor employer" and the establishment of the "successor employer." The definition of a triggering event varies depending on which sector is involved.

The hospital sector: For them the act may apply as a result of (1) a merger of all or part of the operations or administration of two or more employers who operate hospitals during the transition period; or (2) a substantial restructuring of two or more employers who operate hospitals during the transition period. What that really means is that it will apply to most hospital workers and health services in this province. There are few hospitals that have not been touched or will not be touched in some manner, in some form by the closures of hospitals in their region, in their municipality, in their county or whatever their jurisdiction is. To add insult to injury, now that Bill 136 is being forced on to these workers, the quality of services will suffer even more. The quality of services, the nature of services and some services will disappear.

**1640**

For the school sector, only non-teaching staff are affected by this particular act. The act applies on the combination of two or more existing school boards by one of the new district school boards. The act does not apply to employees covered by the School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act, which of course is Bill 100. We expect that companion legislation will be brought forward soon by the Minister of Education to tackle what I'm sure he says is the teachers and their arrangements.

To determine the structure for collective bargaining, the act contemplates a process by which the parties themselves will agree on the composition of the new bargaining units. But the transition commission will have broad powers to issue orders specifying which institutions are viewed as predecessor or successor employers and to issue orders concerning the number and the composition of bargaining units in the successor employer's organization.

If the parties are unable to negotiate a resolution with respect to the composition of the new bargaining units, it says any party may apply to the Labour Relations Transition Commission — any party — to have that issue determined. The commission will determine the issue on a supposed expedited basis. The commission may hold a hearing, but there is no right to a hearing. It may order submissions, but not necessarily, and impose whatever limits or importance on the presentations it sees fit.

Following the changeover date in amalgamations, it becomes incumbent upon the successor employer and employees to come to a new collective agreement. Where a collective agreement has been continued under the act or a composite agreement created, either party may give notice to bargain a replacement agreement.

This is a forced opening of collective agreements. At this point the government has set up a new process to deal with the bargaining process and it is set out under the Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act. The act, as I've already alluded to earlier, reforms the entire structure of third-party resolution of collective bargaining disputes in the fire, police and hospital sectors. It centralizes all the power to resolve all disputes in these sectors through the Dispute Resolution Commission by replacing the arbitration board process currently used for each separate piece of legislation. Although the government states that Bill 136 is only a temporary measure to deal with restructuring, for essential services this change is permanent.

For other public sector employers such as municipalities, the government smoothes —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would just like to recognize the former member for Lambton, Mr David Smith.

The member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr Patten:** Thank you. For other public sector employers such as municipalities, the government smoothes over the changes by saying that the new Dispute Resolution Commission will have temporary powers to resolve disputes over negotiations only for first contracts or replacement contracts following restructuring.

There will be no chance for employees to exercise their legitimate right to strike, because the legislation outlines that within 30 days of the notice to bargain, either party can ask that the negotiations be referred to the Dispute Resolution Commission for arbitration. In effect, what this does is it neutralizes the right to strike or to lock out and undermines the collective bargaining process. While the government says it does not take away the right to strike directly, the fact of the matter is that the process to be followed effectively takes away the right-to-strike option.

Judith McCormack, who is a past member of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, in my opinion made a good point in an article she wrote called "First Arbitration in Ontario." She says, "The mere fact that a collective agreement has not been reached is not determinative of whether collective bargaining is unsuccessful where it has not been allowed to run its full course." In effect what she is saying is that the government is prejudging the labour relations process. Regardless of whether collective bargaining has run its course, either party can refer the dispute to a binding decision, no questions asked.

The government argues that their legislation is balanced out by the risk factor associated with an arbitrated settlement, that this uncertainty is an incentive to work within the collective bargaining process. The minister has stated, "By creating greater incentives for the parties to settle disputes themselves, this new process will protect taxpayers against disruptions of public services." The government may well think it is creating an incentive by telling the parties that they can solve the dispute or the dispute will be solved for them. That's what already exists. But the path to arbitration has been prejudiced because the arbitration process the government is putting in place is neither impartial nor independent.

How can anyone legitimately have confidence in an arbitrator if he or she is appointed by the government, especially when the government has a stake in the outcome? In fact, the government has a conflict of interest. The process is not balanced between both parties. It is lopsided in favour of the government. If it isn't balanced, the risk is not shared, and in the case of Bill 136 there is very little uncertainty for the employer and therefore little risk.

The Dispute Resolution Commission is directed by the government to consider several factors which play right into the hands of the employers. These factors are the same ones specified and used under Bill 26: the employer's ability to pay in light of its fiscal situation; the extent to which services may have to be reduced, in light of the commission's decision, if current levels of funding and taxation are not increased; the economic situation in Ontario and the municipality; a comparison, as between the employees and other comparable employees in the public and private sectors, of the terms and conditions of employment and the nature of the work performed; the employer's ability to allow and retain qualified firefighters; the purposes set out in section 1 of the Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act, 1997.

Section 1 includes a subsection that talks about affordability. Let's go back to the employer's ability to pay in light of its fiscal situation. Who determines the fiscal situation? The government does. The government, it seems, determines everything, yet at the same time is responsible for nothing.

I want to share with the members of this House an article written by Jeffrey Sack QC which was published in the Labour Arbitration Yearbook, of which he is an editor. It is titled "Ability to Pay in the Public Sector: A Critical Approach." I would recommend it to all members of the House, especially members in the government caucus.

Mr Sack points out that an overwhelming majority of independent interest arbitrators have rejected ability to pay as a relevant criterion in public sector disputes. Here are a number of reasons why they have rejected it, and many of you will know that the independent arbitrators have to be eligible by being non-partisan, by having demonstrated that they have not been on one side or the other in terms of their personal views and their activities for a good period of time before they would even be considered, and that they have demonstrated their skills and their ethics related to being an arbitrator.

Here's what a number of them had to say:

Ability to pay is a factor entirely within the government's own control. This is very important.

The government cannot escape its obligation to pay normative wage increases to public sector employees by limiting the funds made available to public institutions.

Entrenchment of ability to pay as a criterion deprives the arbitrators of their independence, and in doing so discredits the arbitration process.

These aren't my words. These are the association, Mr Sack and his view in terms of arbitration.

**1650**

While governments in the past have tried to use the ability-to-pay provisions, such as the Progressive Conservatives, the Tories, back in 1983, the provision has led to a breakdown in labour relations and met with protest, most significantly by arbitrators, who view the provisions as an incursion on their independence. In fact, in 1983 several arbitrators refused to accept an appointment as an arbitrator under the legislation. The then Conservative government retreated from its program and allowed free collective bargaining to rule the day.

Further reasons working against the ability-to-pay provision are:

The public sector employees should not be required to subsidize public sector services through substandard wages.

Public sector employees should not be penalized because they have been deprived of the right to strike; heretofore at least they had independent arbitrators, mutually accepted by employers or management and employees, to settle contract disputes.

Government ought not to be allowed to escape its responsibility by making political decisions in which it has overall jurisdiction, authority or by hiding behind a purported inability to pay.

Arbitrators are not in a position to measure a public sector employer's ability to pay without clear and decisive direction from government. Which employer would say they have plenty of money available for their employees as they enter into renegotiating a collective agreement? That wouldn't even be said in the private sector. It wouldn't be said in the public sector. Companies that we know are flush wouldn't say, "We have loads of money to give to our employees." They always say they have no money regardless of their actual situation. So who determines that?

All of these points are relevant to the current government and the arguments it has put forward in every measure it has undertaken since June 9, 1995, and which continue with this legislation. Mr. Sack's own assessment of this concept is "'Ability to pay' is really a code for unilateral wage determination, and a requirement to take ability to pay into account amounts to a barely disguised effort to impose a program of wage controls while maintaining a façade of free collective bargaining and arbitration." This is a very thoughtful man who has spent a lot of time looking at the whole process of arbitration and one who I suggest has wisdom, and we should heed his observations and his thoughts.

Unilateral wage determination is not what fair collective bargaining is about, and you can't have it both ways. In the current context, this government is trying to hide behind a situation of its own making, and that is effectively what the credit rating agencies have said. Rick Jackson, for example, an industrial relations professor, in an article entitled "Interest Arbitration Under Ontario's Police Services Act — An Arbitrator's Perspective," also in the Labour Arbitration Yearbook, wrote, "A government should not be allowed by an arbitrator to solve its fiscal problems — problems which are largely predictable outcomes of its own decisions — by treating its employees unfairly."

I agree fully with that statement. It is neither fair nor impartial arbitration. He goes on to say, "Given the state of public sector finances in Ontario, it is entirely possible that we will see a period, with an improving economy, in which school boards and police services boards" — I will add municipalities to this — "will argue that they cannot afford increases as much as the private sector." We know that will happen.

Oddly enough, this is the exact situation we find ourselves in. That is the exact argument that this government is using. There is a constant refrain from members on the other side: "Our province's finances are in such a mess we have to rein in the public sector. We have no choice but to cut." This has put the public sector employers in a very precarious position. They are struggling under severe cuts, cuts brought on by the fiscal choices of this government. In fact, what this bill really does is remove any incentive for the two parties together to reach a negotiated settlement, because given these criteria, it is in the employer's financial interest to stop negotiating and to run to the government-appointed commission and ask for an imposed decision, be they school boards, municipalities, hospital administrations.

In fact, numerous municipalities have already told their police forces that they will not bargain until Bill 136 and its arbitration provisions are in place. Why would they do that? Obviously they do that because they know that 136 favours the employers. That's why they're doing it. Otherwise, they would get on with negotiating what they have to negotiate, but they're not. They're waiting for this bill.

I have spoken to a few members from AMO, and they said the same thing relating to this aspect of the bill, that it will be helpful to them in their negotiations with their employees. They didn't say, "It's going to be tough, but we'll try to do the best we can because we care about our services and we care about our employees." That wasn't what they said.

The premature tax cut is keeping our province's fiscal situation and adding to the chaos. Let me read what Moody's Investors Service had to say about the government's tax cut:

"Fully implemented, the initiative will cost the government about $5 billion in forgone revenue.... The specific tax cuts announced to date total more than $3 billion this fiscal year, representing close to 45% of the budgeted deficit.... From a budgetary perspective, the magnitude of the announced tax cut increases the risk that cuts beyond what is currently contemplated to be needed to secure the government's medium-term balanced budget objective."

This is from Moody's Investors Service. That's what they had to say. In simple terms, Ontario is borrowing 45% more money than it would have had it not been for the premature tax cut. The financial impact of this is critical. First of all, the tax cut is preventing the province from getting a better credit rating, which means that it costs all Ontarians more in interest rates. Secondly, we're borrowing more money than we should be and at a much higher rate. So who will pay in the end? In one pocket and out the other for most people affected by that tax cut.

Standard and Poor's and Dominion Bond Rating, who also spent weeks going over the province's books, came to the same conclusion, that the premature tax cut undercuts putting Ontario's fiscal house in order. This is the crux and the supposition behind this legislation. This government created the need to cut programs and transfer payments by introducing a tax cut before the province could afford one.

You'll remember that very eloquent statement made by Premier Klein in response to the tax cut in Ontario before the deficit was balanced. He said it was stupid, and it is foolhardy, because we will pay for it through loss of services and we'll pay for it at home.

A tax cut before the province could afford one is really what we're talking about. Most people would agree — probably all parties would agree — that it would be nice to give a tax cut if we have all our services in place, it would be nice to give a tax cut when we've got streamlined organizations, but not until you deal with the deficit, let alone the accumulated debt, which will be, by the time this government is through its mandate, over $100 billion. That's the Ontario government's mortgage.

**1700**

The financial situation is the government's justification for controlling the collective bargaining process in the public sector and effectively suspending basic labour rights such as the right to strike and the right to a fair and impartial arbitration process. Who oversees the process? Two so-called arm's-length commissions. Where do they come from? Appointed by order in council, or in laypersons' terms the cabinet, or in the case of this government the Premier's office.

Once again we have two commissions established to do the distasteful work of the government under the guise of arm's-length bodies and independent third parties, which we know they are not. Everything from the government appointing the arbitrators to requiring them to take the financial impact of their awards into account is tilted away from fair, independent and impartial collective bargaining.

As I see it, the deck has been stacked in favour of a positive outcome for the employer and ultimately the government. If not, why would we have this legislation before us? We already have the Ontario Labour Relations Board. As I mentioned earlier, it has a proven record of capable and professional management of relations between the province's employees and employer communities. But the government says that the labour board is too busy, that it would be too busy to deal with this particular issue.

I suggest, when that's said, that we're being fed a line, because this government cut the funding to the labour board by 40% or over. That was last year. This occurred at the very time when the resources and the knowledge of this board would be most needed. It's a well-known fact that the government intruded on the independent, impartial membership of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. There was the well-publicized dismissal of three board members. Presumably they were from another party — wrongful dismissals, according to the courts of this province.

There is no justification for establishing two new commissions and ignoring the Ontario Labour Relations Board. What is going to be the cost of these new commissions? Nobody has shared that view. The minister has not talked to us about the costs of those two commissions. Will they be taking the money they took away from the Ontario Labour Relations Board and giving it to these commissions? We also don't know what the costs are for the restructuring of hospitals and we don't know what the costs are for the transition forum for education either. It would be quite interesting to see. I have a hunch it's in the tens of millions of dollars. It hasn't been talked about because it wouldn't make sense.

Let's see: We have a government that has a different view of labour relations from that of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The government cuts the funding to the board, then sets up its own commissions because the board doesn't have the required resources. Doesn't that sound a little contradictory, somewhat of a specious argument? Indeed it is, but it fits completely with what I call the heavy hand of this government. It reminds me of the Star Wars sequel The Empire Strikes Back, but in this case it's The Government Strikes Back. We've seen time and time again where the government does not trust the existing structures and moves to squelch any opposition.

Most recently we saw it with changes to the rules of this House just this past week, changes to grossly limit the ability of the loyal opposition, which has a responsibility, when necessary, to cause the government to pause when it believes there is a requirement for more consultation or hearings or to take a second look at their legislation. Watch how short a time this bill will take to move through second reading. It will probably be done in three days. It's my hunch that it'll be through probably by Thursday, because now each day the government has the option of doubling its days because it can sit from 6 to 9 each evening and call that a sessional day. I say to you, to the tens of thousands of people watching, watch what the government will do with this bill. They will attempt to have it completed by the end of this week.

So the government is showing that it does not trust the existing structures in terms of the health services. It has set up the Health Services Restructuring Commission as a separate body, ostensibly to have a more objective analysis of what may happen. Why did it not negotiate with the district health councils, which had proposals, had all the data, are more representative locally and are designated and designed to plan overall health care changes in their particular region?

We have in the field what is called, I think cynically, the Education Improvement Commission, which might better have been called the education implementation or adjustment commission, but the government always uses these in-your-face terms. There is some wordsmith in the Premier's office who is obviously very good at coining these phrases that often mean the antithesis of the true mission of the legislation. This Education Improvement Commission, by the way, will be another vehicle that will stand between the government and school boards so the minister can say: "It wasn't me. It wasn't the government. It is this commission that will be sorting out these particular issues."

Then, because all the changes that are going to be taking place in health, in education, in municipalities, what do we find? Lo and behold, another commission, in fact two — a commission for the transition phase in municipalities, for example, where there is an amalgamation. What happens to the workers who have

one contract with one arrangement and the other workers with another? I spent some considerable time talking with people at the municipal level and I must ask again, why did the government not use the Ontario Labour Relations Board? They say it's because the Ontario Labour Relations Board is too busy and doesn't have the scope to deal with this particular issue. Of course it doesn't have the scope. If you lost 40% of the budget in your department or your organization or your municipality, you would probably lose some scope too.

I have a note from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and they voted on Bill 136 on a motion this afternoon. The amendment reads, "That we ask the government to withdraw the bill until there has been dialogue with the affected parties." So when you say there have been satisfactory negotiations with AMO, that's not what they're saying. When you say you've had negotiations with municipalities, somehow the other side is saying that ain't the case.

Any members who doubt that, go down the street and talk to your municipal mayors or representatives or staff people and see what they have to say. For example, where there is an amalgamation, what will happen, as I mentioned?

Sorry, Mr Speaker, I got sidetracked on this note, which I thought was very important to share with the House.

**1710**

How can we have, after these statements and the statement we just received from AMO, any confidence, or trust is perhaps a better word, in this government after what it has done? They've run roughshod over our hospitals and district health councils, they are running roughshod over our school boards and they've run roughshod over our municipalities and their representatives and their associations. Who can forget the resounding 76% of the people of Metro Toronto and their No to the Toronto megacity legislation, Bill 103? None of us will forget it, and I bet you the people of Metro Toronto won't forget it when down the road we are called to go back to the people.

I would suggest that members visit the AMO conference today to hear the disgruntled mayors concerning downloading and this particular bill. You just heard what they passed as a resolution. Contrary to what the minister has said, there was no consultation, or little consultation if any, with the parties who were most affected. Consultation simply was not part of the picture.

Nor would the Premier meet with those affected by the legislation: labour leaders, workers. Instead, Mike Harris repeatedly stood in this House and said to the media that he was willing to meet with those affected. This is what he said on August 18, and I quote the Premier: "Of course" we will meet. "So will the Minister of Labour, so will the cabinet and so will I." But there has yet to be a meeting. He said it three or four times outside of the House, and in the House, and I wonder why.

Instead, the government took what it thought was the easy route: just ignore the dissenting voices. The government created the chaos it is now trying to find a way to fix. They have tried to come up with a process to hide the mess that will result from their massive downloading of provincial services, but the only way out of it, they say, is to do away with basic labour rights in this province. The government is intent on picking apart existing agreements to replace them with less expensive or cheaper deals to pay for the provincial cutbacks to municipalities, school boards and hospitals.

I want to say that I met with a few people yesterday, some representatives who were at the AMO annual meeting. What they were saying was that the government says it will be a wash in terms of what's been downloaded except for two very important factors. One is the government takes away the support grant to municipalities.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** — years ago.

**Mr Patten:** It was not taken away 50 years ago. It was taken away recently; it was cut back. Then they dump on municipalities new costs of provincial highways that run through the municipal jurisdiction. When you add in those costs, it exacerbates the costs for municipalities. That's why the municipalities are so upset.

I want to share with the House the Ottawa Citizen's editorial of June 6 which was entitled, "Province's Union Move Necessary." While I disagree with some of the substance of the editorial, its conclusion is interesting and thought-provoking. Here's an excerpt from that editorial:

"Unions are upset by the provincial plan and rightly so. The right to strike is important and ought not to be taken away lightly. It's always troubling when the province, in its role as employer, changes the rules to suit itself."

This is very true and I believe it's very dangerous. This will bring us into turmoil we haven't seen in a long, long time in this province.

Herein lies the crux of the whole debate. This is not a situation upon which the province has stumbled. It is one that has been written, produced and acted out by the government of Mike Harris.

The only labour chaos that will occur will be a direct result of this government's attempt to control everything from top to bottom and hand over as much as possible to the private sector and to the local municipalities, and they're doing it under the smokescreen of a confrontation with the labour movement. The confrontation isn't an accident. I believe it's an intentional strategy to divert attention from the government's real overall master plan.

This was the Harris government that promised in the last election to get government out of your way. Ironically, this is probably the most intrusive, in-your-face government affecting the lives of people in the last 50 years.

John Ibbitson of the Ottawa Citizen has an upcoming book entitled The Promised Land: Inside the Mike Harris Revolution. I want to read an excerpt from it that was in Friday's Ottawa Citizen: Mr Ibbitson concludes that those attempts, the implementation of the Common Sense Revolution, have changed not just the laws and programs of Ontario, but have also altered the way Ontarians relate to each other.

He says: "A society that governed itself by seeking to accommodate conflicting interests has been transformed

into one where interests hurl themselves against each other until the more powerful prevail.... It has also left the citizenry raw and bruised and surly towards one another. And there is no end in sight to the prevailing public distemper."

I agree with Mr Ibbitson on that. The government wrote the script for a showdown with the labour movement. They have produced a showdown by introducing a premature tax cut that has robbed provincial services of revenue and resources, and now they're directing the confrontation move by move, frame by frame, with the provisions of this legislation.

Termination of the employee wage protection program is further evidence of what I think is really a mean-spirited basis and the heavy-handed approach of this government.

The provincial program had helped some 89,000 employees between 1991 and 1997 who were owed wages and vacation pay after their employer declared bankruptcy. Many of the individuals who were assisted were employees who earned a weekly wage and lived paycheque to paycheque, only to find that the money they were owed for their labour would not be forthcoming. The victims are ordinary hardworking employees, not the general taxpayers as the minister has already tried to argue. Without this protection, these employers are at the bottom of the creditors' list. In all fairness, they should be first on the list, having given their labour already.

Why would the government favour big banks over the little guy not getting his due wages?

The government is pulling a fast one by lumping the program in with its labour relations changes. The only link between the elimination of this program and the changes to collective bargaining is money. The program is ending so that the government can get back revenues from its premature tax cut, and that's the same with these new commissions which are designed to get money out of public sector collective agreements.

The government says it will seek changes to the federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act to improve the standing of workers in relation to other creditors, such as banks, but why not phase out the program as the objectives are met? Why pull the rug right out from under these workers? It strikes me as strange the government would move in this fashion.

In all the government's literature and discourse on the tax cut they talk about ensuring that Ontarians keep more of their hard-earned money, but what about those workers and their hard-earned wages? They're going to be stiffed by their employers. The government is sending the message that they don't care. What will be the end result? You'll have fewer people with less money to spend in the economy.

The government has far more resources at its disposal to try and collect from delinquent employers than the ordinary worker. They are being thrown to the wolves and it's a sad commentary on this government's commitment to community spirit.

This legislation is only a first step. It's part of a larger agenda. It's a particular view of the world that the government is imposing on the province. Today it's unions, but in reality it is unionized workers. Next it will be all workers. Every single last individual in this province will be affected by changes to this province's labour relations climate, everyone who earns a wage or a salary and everyone who relies on public service, which is most Ontarians.

This government is forcing working conditions and wage rates down for ordinary workers right across the province. This legislation has to be seen in the light of the overall labour relations changes, particularly those we have yet to see from the reviews of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Employment Standards Act.

That is why in the end Mike Harris is going to see that his ultimate opposition is not the labour movement; rather it is everyone who cares about this province, who cares about the standard of living and the quality of public services.

I'd like to conclude my remarks by saying that I look forward to the province-wide public hearings to which the minister committed herself on June 4, because I notice she did not mention that in her presentation today. But she did say: "Yes, I commit to you that there will be full public hearings. We will travel the province, we will be in Toronto and we will listen." That's what the minister said.

I am convinced that the word from everyday working Ontarians will be decidedly different from what this Harris government thinks is the way to treat people.

**1720**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Before I recognize the member for Hamilton Centre, I'd like to acknowledge in the members' gallery guests of the member for Cambridge, representatives from Cambridge council, councillors Greg Durocher, Karl Kiefer, Bill Struck; from the township of Wilmot, councillor at large Bill Weichel and Mrs Weichel; and Mr Connolly, councillor from the city of Waterloo, and Mrs Connolly. Welcome.

**Mr Christopherson:** I would like to compliment the member for Ottawa Centre on his remarks. I think he has outlined a number of the major concerns that are out there and expanded on them quite effectively.

Of course, I only have two minutes to respond at this point and I want to underscore the fact that the rules have changed in midstream for us. This bill was introduced under existing rules, but once it lands in the House here now, it's debated under other rules. Isn't it interesting, and what a coincidence, I'm sure it's just a coincidence, that the first bill that has limited debate by opposition members happens to be another of your anti-worker labour legislation. I'm sure that's just a coincidence.

We know that the opposition now on the leadoff speech, which is always deemed to be the priority speech, if you will — it's the opportunity to get in depth on these bills and to talk about some of the complexities that are here so we don't have to listen to only bumper sticker slogans, which is the way this government likes to message things — has been limited from 90 minutes to 60. Of course, everyone else no longer has 30 minutes to

speak to a bill after the leadoff speech; they're down to 20 minutes.

After seven hours — and Speaker, seven hours sounds like a lot, it seems like a long time, but as we know, when you already have three hours for the leadoff debate and a number of speakers speak 20 minutes at a time, that doesn't take very long, and with the added sessions in the evening, where you get two days for the price of one, the name of the game is change the law, ram the legislation through, take away workers' rights, and do it as quick as you can. You ought to hang your head in shame for it.

**Mr Maves:** It's a pleasure to rise and respond to the member opposite. I'll try to go quickly to get several things covered.

He talked about a lack of consultation up till now. I want to read one paragraph of the letter that Mr O'Toole read earlier from Minister Witmer to Mr Wilson. It says:

"In drafting this legislation we paid careful attention to the needs and expressed concerns of workplace parties. For example, we heard clearly the concern from organized labour that successor rights not be eliminated and contracting out provisions in collective agreements not be touched. Bill 136 respects both these concerns."

They went on to make phone calls and write letters. Again, I reiterate from the same letter to Mr Wilson from Mrs Witmer:

"I was disappointed when, earlier this week, you declined to meet with me. Nevertheless, I am once again inviting you to meet with me to discuss issues and options with respect to Bill 136."

The Premier made a public invitation. In the paper the next day, Mr Ryan said no. The invitations have been there and they haven't been followed up on.

I hope that does change in the near future. I know that our government is open to having those discussions and I hope that does occur soon.

With regard to AMO, I must say that if a member of AMO is part of an amalgamation and they don't want to refer their labour relations issue to either commission, then they don't have to. That's the whole point of the legislation, that they should negotiate first, well before they even consider any kind of arbitration.

Finally, I have to say that the member opposite spent a lot of time quoting a labour lawyer who says he doesn't like ability to pay being a factor in public sector arbitrations. It doesn't surprise me that a Liberal would say that municipalities, school boards, hospitals shouldn't have to worry about their ability to pay, that they have an endless pit of money that they can continue to grab from to pay and pay and pay. That's why the Liberals brought in 33 tax increases in their time in office, because they didn't think the taxpayer had any limits on his ability to pay.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I too want to commend the member for Ottawa Centre for having led off the opposition comments on this draconian bill.

I hear the member opposite say, "Where are the unions in sitting down with the Minister of Labour?" Where was the Minister of Labour in refusing to consult with any of the public sector unions before she brought in this piece of unprecedented legislation that not only strips away their rights but is the basis for stripping away their contracts in the future?

We heard in this House the Premier of this province say, "I'm ready to meet any time," except there was no invitation for a meeting with the Premier of the province of Ontario. Now, today, he seems to be suggesting, "Maybe we'll meet with them. Maybe this Friday we'll find a little bit of time in the schedule to be able to sit down with representatives of the labour unions," except that if there is any willingness to actually sit down and discuss this bill, to negotiate it, to come up with, as the Premier suggests, a way of dealing with the chaos the government has created without this War Measures Act legislation, if there was any reason to think that the government was prepared to do that, why are we beginning the debate on this bill in this Legislature today?

If the government was serious about negotiating, if they really were prepared to consult, however belated it is, they would set this bill aside and sit down with the unions and talk about a better way of dealing with the crisis that the government has created.

I am impressed that AMO has voted as they have. They are saying, "Go back to the table and negotiate it." For goodness' sake, these are the employers. These are the ones the government says it is supposed to be helping; they're giving the employers the tools they keep talking about to deal with the chaos the government has created for those trying to deal with the provision of public sector services. The employers themselves are saying: "We don't like your bill. We know it is a bad bill. We don't like bills that come in without consultation. We don't trust you either. You dumped the offloading bill on us without any notice, without any consultation. Go back to the table on this one, but withdraw it before you do."

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I too want to commend the member for Ottawa Centre on his comments with respect to Bill 136 and just to say briefly that I sense very clearly a growing nervousness within the government members, from ministers to backbenchers, particularly among the backbenchers, in just watching and seeing what's been happening over the last week or so as people have come back from vacations and from an opportunity to be in their ridings.

It doesn't surprise me, therefore, that the government would be quite interested in getting this particular piece of legislation through as quickly as possible. We see this, as has been pointed out, being done now under the new rule changes in a very quick fashion, with additional debating time, additional time in the evenings, additional sittings so that a bill can be put through probably before the end of next week and then, at least on this one, will have the chance to go out to committee and to hear from people.

As I followed the discussion this afternoon, I was struck by the continuing attempts by the Minister of Labour to, in her calm manner, portray this as a fair and balanced way against what we are seeing not just from the labour movement, the outrage from the labour movement. The members want to make a lot of the exchange of letters

and invitations to meet with the head of the labour movement, Mr Wilson. If there was any seriousness in discussing these issues, the government would not be proceeding with this bill. The government would be stopping, they would be putting the bill aside, they would be sitting down and negotiating in a serious fashion changes that, yes, need to be made, but changes that are done in a way and should be done in a way that continues to respect the collective bargaining rights of workers across the province.

That's not what this government is interested in and that's why they want to ram this bill through as quickly as possible.

**1730**

**Mr Patten:** I'd like to thank the members for Hamilton Centre, Fort William, Dovercourt and Niagara Falls for their comments.

I think the member for Hamilton Centre was right to point out the implications of the rule changes here and what this means.

I would like to respond in particular, though, to the member for Niagara Falls. He suggested that obviously we would think the school boards and municipalities would be full of money. We know they're not full of money. We were pointing out that by adding a feature you changed the nature of negotiations that has been there already.

Of course employers and unions know what's at stake. I've heard them acknowledge that themselves. They're not looking for the kind of money the doctors got, at all, but they're saying there should be fairness. When you introduce ability to pay into the criteria, that's a prejudicial element.

When the member for Niagara Falls he says he's not surprised the Liberals would think they could spend freely, I would point out to him that the only time I think in the last 30 years government has balanced the budget and contributed to the accumulated debt was in 1989. That hasn't happened for a long time. We lived within our budget and we contributed to areas that needed some funding throughout the province. I'm very proud of that fact, that we balanced the budget, helped to strengthen education, helped to strengthen health care, and were still able to contribute to reducing the accumulated debt of this province. I would challenge any other party to match that record.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the opportunity, even though it's limited now, to join the debate.

First off, I'd like to respond to the comments of the parliamentary assistant; it seems like a good place to start. He talks about meetings and about consulting. I would like to offer up the fact that the Ontario Federation of Labour held a special emergency convention, the first ever, I might point out, in their entire 40-year history, to deal with Bill 136 — I think it's also worth pointing out that the over 2,400 participants meant that was also the largest convention they'd ever had — held in the dead of summer on an issue, quite frankly, that only directly hits the public sector part of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and yet all the labour movement rallied around their sisters and brothers in the public sector who are under attack in this round of anti-worker legislation with Bill 136.

At the end of that one-day convention there was a democratic procession, a march from the Sheraton Centre here to the Legislature. The president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Gord Wilson, invited the Premier or a representative to be here, to receive a proclamation that would offer up an alternative process to 136.

You see, the problem with your spin is that you're trying to paint out these public sector workers like they are, once again, one of your special interest enemies, that it's their fault you have to do this. That it's their fault you have take away their rights. That's what you want to spin, but the reality is this is the last group that wants the confrontation you're forcing.

They came here to the Ontario Legislature, up from that one-day convention, and they brought along their proclamation, and all they asked for was the respect anybody deserves when you represent over 600,000 Ontarians. Whether you like them or not is not the issue. There has to be a certain level of respect for that organization.

I can recall when we were the government — and this is why it particularly troubles me — when there was a similar demonstration of the Bay Street types on the front lawn. They were angry over an entirely different issue. It was a fiscal matter. They had every right to protest, but I have to admit it was the first time I've seen that many cabs delivering up protesters to the front of the Leg, but hey, there you go, live and learn. They were loud and they had signs and they had buttons, all the things that to you people means you're almost a terrorist, because that's certainly the way you treat demonstrators when they come to this place.

What happened when they came here? They were outraged. They were there in massive numbers. I give them their due, they organized it well. The Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance, went out in front and stood in front of that crowd and talked to them. He got hollered at, he got heckled. He could hardly be heard by half the people out there. That wasn't the point. The point was that he was showing the respect those citizens deserved.

You didn't even do that. You didn't have one representative, not the Premier, not the minister, not a parliamentary assistant, not a single lowly government backbencher — no one.

If you want to talk about consultation, if you want to talk about meetings, how about Bill 49? There are two kinds of meetings that happen with ministers, and having been there, I think I have a fairly good sense of these things. There are two kinds of meetings you have with ministers.

One is where it's legitimate that the minister is responsible for a particular item. The Premier cannot meet with everyone, that's understood. But things are big enough that they deserve to have a minister present, so the

minister will meet with a group to talk about a particular issue, whatever it might be. That's one kind of meeting.

The other one is damage control. They're running interference for the Premier. It's good politics. It's not very appropriate in terms of manners, but that is the way it happens.

This minister is running interference for the Premier. She can't change what's in 136, only the Premier's office can do that. The leadership of the labour movement representing workers in this province know that. They're not going to let themselves be conned or had or diverted by meeting with the minister. They want to meet with the decision-maker on this issue. They want to meet with the Premier.

Besides, this is the same minister, by the way, who on Bill 49, a week before, said, "Oh, don't worry about Bill 49," where you took away rights from non-unionized workers who don't have the benefit of a collective agreement and the Employment Standards Act. You took away their rights, and a week before that same minister met with the heads of the unions and Gord Wilson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, and said, "Don't worry, it's only a minor housekeeping bill, a few little nuts and bolts."

The reality is it did take away major rights, to the point that we were able to shame your government into holding four weeks of province-wide public hearings, where we completely thrashed and trashed your legislation as you tried to say, "Oh, it doesn't take anything away." Yes, it did. It left the most vulnerable in our society even more vulnerable. It was your minister who led them down the garden path, because the very day that legislation was introduced, where were those very labour leaders? They were at a labour convention, a conference in another part of the country, and the minister knew that.

When the parliamentary assistant wants to stand up and talk about who wants to meet with whom, the fact of the matter is that the only time your Premier publicly committed in this place to meet with the representatives of those workers you're about to attack was when I asked him a question directly. The labour leaders who were here were outraged by the insulting answer he gave, and finally at the end of it all last Monday he stood up and said, "Okay, I'll meet with them."

But we still had to push him further because for a couple of days the phone call didn't happen, after he'd committed in this House that it would. So don't start to play games and talk about the fact that the people representing the workers in this case are the ones who are refusing to meet. It doesn't hold, it doesn't wash and you ought to know better than try to defend the record of a minister like the one you're associated with.

**1740**

The other comment the parliamentary assistant made was on AMO — a very, very interesting turn of events. In my own community, and I'm very proud of them, Hamilton city council passed a resolution that they were opposed to the passage of Bill 136 and urged that it be withdrawn by the government of Ontario or defeated by the Legislature and that the collective bargaining practices and procedures under existing Ontario labour relations legislation continue without political interference.

Bravo to Hamilton city council for having the courage to do that. Why did they do it? For the same reason that Barbara Hall in Toronto took the same position, and I would argue for the same reason that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario did, which I also used to be a member of prior to coming here, so I have a bit of understanding of that world too. Why did they do that? Because they've got working labour relations that provide the stability and the efficiency you propose to put forward under Bill 136.

What they don't need is the kind of chaos you're creating by pushing working people to the wall. Worse than that, you tie one hand behind their back and then you want to pick a fight with them. You're pretty good at that. You did that with OPSEU. You certainly did that with injured workers. That's exactly what this government has done and that's why AMO took that position.

You know as well as I do there are a whole lot more Tories elected municipally than there are New Democrats, and I don't know about the mix between Liberals and Tories, but certainly there are a whole lot more Tories, and traditionally that was always the farm team for people who eventually came up into the Ontario Legislature and on to the federal Parliament. We're starting to catch on to that method so we're starting to elect as many working people and ordinary, average, everyday citizens as we can.

This is not a group that is politically predisposed to wanting to reach out and sting you. Quite the contrary. They have oftentimes been quite supportive, been willing to sit down and talk, been somewhat I would say guarded and pulled back on some of their comments from time to time, but they have taken that position because the chaos you're going to cause in our communities is one they're going to have to live with. They don't have the benefit of hiding here in the Legislature like the rest of you. They are out there in the community and they are going to have to deal with the reality of what Bill 136 means and what you're going to force working people to do. What choice do they have?

The minister talks consistently about fairness and balance. There's no fairness or balance in Bill 136. Give me a break. Here's what's happening. You've got to find the $5 billion to $6 billion that you need to pay for your tax cut. Everybody agreed there had to be changes. What they don't agree with is that it has to be done this way, and certainly any of the changes that have been made were not fiscally required in terms of being in a position where you're giving back 30% of your revenue. That has to be paid for, and unfortunately it's being paid for right now in my community, my home town of Hamilton, with another one of your infamous commissions: the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

We've got one or maybe two hospitals that are on the line, and part of that is to pay for your 30% tax cut. I'm

not sure whom you represent when you are here in this House, but the people I represent are going to be lucky if they get a couple of cups of coffee out of that 30%. We know that those who already have and do quite well under our system are going to be getting thousands of dollars back in your tax cut, and the average working middle-class family will be lucky to get a few bucks. Ask any of your constituents. That's the reality. That's what's happening. We've got this situation where that still has to be paid for.

It's fine to stand up and make the announcement. It always sounds good to say you're going to cut taxes. Everybody likes that. I don't think there is anybody in here who really wants to pay more taxes, and if there's a way to pay less, why not? Of course. It's not rocket science. However, there's a price to be paid, and who's paying it? Who is paying the price of your tax cut? Communities and families and their standard of living and their quality of life. If you're making 200 grand or 300 grand a year, none of this is bothering you. You can afford to pay for a private school system. You can afford to take care of your health needs even if you have to go outside the country to do it. You can —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, member for Hamilton Centre. I'm sorry, I don't mean to break you off in mid-stride, but I would ask the member for Grey-Owen Sound if he would be so kind as to remove the button from his lapel. Thank you.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** Mr Speaker, I'm from the north, and we need you.

**The Speaker:** Well, I'm from the south and I need you too. We can't go around wearing buttons like that. Okay? Good work. Thanks so much.

**Mr Christopherson:** That's why people who are making a lot of money are quite fine by all of this. It's the average people and their families who are paying the price. We see it through the health restructuring where you're shutting down hospitals, the dispensing fees you've added on to seniors, the increased costs across the board. That's where the cost is.

But a large part of it — and this is where a lot of the public, I admit, tend to start glazing over, because it's the relationship from one government to another and it just doesn't always sound like it's that important or that it means anything. But in this case it's crucial, it's pivotal to understand that the slashing and the cutting, the degree of cuts this government is making to the transfer payments they give to municipalities is such that municipalities are going to have to start slashing services by laying off people, or raise taxes.

But you've told them they can't raise taxes. You've said they can afford to cut the 2% or 3%, whatever your spin numbers are. But those of us who have served on municipal councils know that we're getting right at the heart of communities, right at the ability of a community to survive and thrive.

Your magic solution, since you don't like working people and you don't want wages to be any higher than they absolutely have to be — unless they're your own, but if it's anybody else's wages, it's too much — is to bring in legislation that would have forced municipalities, you thought — and as it's turning out, thank God, most of them decided they're not going to go that way — or allowed those that wanted to, to go after the wages and benefits of the ordinary working people who happen to work in the public sector.

As much as you may say the public sector is evil, those happen to be hard-working, decent people providing a service to their neighbours and their community. It has just as much honour and deserves just as much respect as the job any of you do or anyone else in the private sector. But you don't show that respect; you show total disrespect.

What this bill does — let's remember, you've got to find your $5 billion to $6 billion to pay for the tax cut your wealthy friends are going to benefit from. Part of that is being paid for by shutting down hospitals, making classrooms larger and reducing the amount of money municipalities get. They, on the other hand, are being told, "We'll give you this great legislation that lets you go after those evil public sector people."

What we've got is this nifty clause that now says "ability to pay," which again sounds very reasonable. How could it be any other way? The difference of course is that governments decide what they can pay for and what they can't, and they control their own expenditure and revenue at will. By artificially imposing ability to pay and then cutting back the amount of money that municipalities have, you are the instigator of those families having a lower standard of living.

The minister will stand up and say — and I see the parliamentary assistant shaking his head: "But they can go on to bargain. Nothing has been lost here. They have the opportunity to still continue to bargain." No they don't. That's the bumper-sticker slogan version of what's going on. Scratch a little bit under the surface and what do we find? The reality is that it only takes one party to send it to your new Dispute Resolution Commission.

**1750**

And who's going to be on this commission? Will it be from a group of people who are selected by labour and business and where they both agree, "Yes, that's a fair person, who has sort of a judge-like personality, someone with a great deal of integrity and respect, and we'd be prepared to live by his or her judgement," or a panel of them? Is that who the commission will be made up of? Oh, no, no, no. This commission, unlike arbitrators, who decide in any other instance where a matter goes to an arbitrator, is chosen by the cabinet. Well, those lucky, lucky public sector workers. They get to have their collective agreement written by Mike Harris's golfing buddies. Wouldn't that fill you with a lot of warmth and comfort?

There you go. You've now got municipalities that have had their money severely cut and who see services in their communities, desperately needed services, on the line and you've said: "But you can take the money out of wages

and benefits and we'll make sure we tie at least one hand, if not both hands, of the union.

We're going to make sure that it's the ability to pay, so the fact that we cut you back can now be factored in as a reason you don't have to deal with a decent standard of living for your employees. Second, if it looks like you might end up in a strike situation and you happen to have people who have formed a strong organization and respect one another and collectively deal with the employer to offset the power they have, normally called a union, if it looks like you might have to face them with the possibility of them saying, 'Hey, if you're not reasonable and fair, we're going to have to use the only alternative you leave us.'" — if that's a possibility for this employer, you've said: "We've got a great solution for that too. You can decide on your own, employer, that you don't have to take them on. You can eliminate their ability to bargain fairly and effectively, because they've lost the only tool they have, and send it off to our commission, full of all our kind of right-thinking" — and I do mean right-wing-thinking — "people."

That's exactly what you're doing, and now you've had a major setback. First of all, I don't think you expected that the labour movement could unite the way they have. There are differences in the labour movement, as there are differences anywhere, but make no mistake: Whether it's public sector or private sector, the labour movement is prepared to fight and represent the interests of the working people they're elected to represent, and they are united.

That's the one thing you weren't expecting. The other thing you weren't expecting was AMO to do what they just did, which was to pass a resolution saying that they don't want you to proceed with Bill 136, that you've got to find another way

Isn't that interesting? That's also what the workers' representatives are telling you. They're saying: "We don't want the confrontation. We don't want a fight. We don't want to strike. We don't want any of this. We didn't pick this fight. You did. You brought in Bill 136. You're the one that started all this. We're quite happy to continue with where we've been and where we're going."

Judy Darcy, the national president of CUPE, pointed out in an article that she wrote for the Globe and Mail on July 22 that she's not aware that there has been even one strike as a result of restructuring. But again you want to tell everybody: "Taxpayers, we're protecting your interest. We're going to make sure you're okay. We're doing this for you."

That's not what's going on. This is all about getting back to the point where you can pay for your tax cut. The money has to be found, and you want to lower the standard of living and the income of the families and workers who are in the public sector.

You've tried to demonize "public sector." You've suggested that the only way to make things work in Ontario is to privatize it, and that all you have to do is water down the power of the labour bosses and water down all the rights and perks that all these people have.

Do you know that the average wage for the broader public sector is about $24,000, $25,000? That's whom we're talking about. We're talking about the people who clean the schools. We're talking about the people who collect the garbage, who run our recreation centres, who work in hospitals. These are all our neighbours, our families, but you want to demonize them with that special-interest title that says "public sector worker." If you can do that, then you feel you can politically legitimize going after them.

There are thousands and thousands of former public sector workers who are now gone, on the unemployment lines, because that has been your approach. You haven't wanted to talk to anybody about alternatives. All you want to do is cut, cut, cut, and if that means some of you out there have to tighten your belts, that's what we all have to do.

We've all got to live a little more lean than we have in the past, and we've all got to tighten our belts — except, of course, if you're one of the lucky ones who is getting to get thousands and thousands of dollars from that 30% tax cut. They don't have to tighten their belts; in fact, they can afford to take a little longer down south in winter or buy a new car a little sooner than they would have before.

It's so easy to sit back, when all your creature comforts are looked after, and say, "Yes, everybody has to cut back; everybody is just going to have to cut the fat and make sure that this thing runs efficiently." When anybody comes along and says, "It doesn't have to be this way; there's another way to do this without attacking the standard of living of working people," you don't want to listen, you don't want to talk, only when you're forced or shamed into it.

You did the same thing to the injured workers on Bill 99 when you said you were going to talk to them and listen to what they had to say, and you threw out crumbs: six days across the province, because you knew you couldn't withstand a prolonged attack. You knew you were going to get beat up out there, and you did in every community we were in. You have done it to every single worker, with pieces of legislation that affect them, since you came into office.

When we talk about the two commissions that you have set up, people don't have a lot of faith in what you're doing. I will wrap up for this part of it, Speaker, because we're getting close to 6. But I want to mention that, first of all, people know that when you set up a commission, it's working people who get hit in their standard of living. Second, they know it's going to be full of your ideologically, hard, right-wing-driven types who will be on there.

They also know that the name of the game is that you want someone else to blame. Think about it. You want the ability, every time a collective agreement gets gutted by your new Dispute Resolution Commission, to say: "Oh, it wasn't us. It was them. It was the commission."

You set up the commission, and we know that's what you're going to do, because your health minister does it every time there's an announced hospital closure in a

community in this province. He stands there and says, "That wasn't me; that was the commission," like it somehow evolved after the big bang and came there all on its own. You created that commission, you have responsibility for what you're doing to hospitals, and you're creating these anti-labour commissions, and you're going to be held responsible for what they're doing to working people and their legitimate collective agreements.

**The Speaker:** It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

## ERRATUM

| No. | Page | Column | Line | Should read: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 217 | 11408 | 2 | 6-7 | **Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues])**: It gives me great |

# CONTENTS

## Monday 25 August 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Family support plan**
Mr Hoy ..... 11445
**Ontario Northland Transportation Commission**
Mr Len Wood ..... 11445
**Parole system**
Mr Flaherty ..... 11445
**Government's record**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11446
**Charitable gaming**
Ms Lankin ..... 11446
**Serge Leclair**
Mr Baird ..... 11446
**Public health**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11446
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11447
**Services for the disabled**
Mrs Ross ..... 11447

### FIRST READINGS

**City of Hamilton Act (Licensing Committee), 1997**
Bill Pr65, *Mrs Ross*
Agreed to ..... 11447

### MOTIONS

**House sittings**
Mr David Johnson ..... 11447
Mr Bradley ..... 11448
The Speaker ..... 11448
Agreed to ..... 11448

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Cordiano ..... 11448
Mr David Johnson ..... 11448, 11451
Mr Hampton ..... 11451
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Agostino ..... 11449
Mr Sterling ..... 11450, 11451
Mr Christopherson ..... 11450
Mrs Ross ..... 11456
Mr Runciman ..... 11456
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bradley ..... 11452
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11452
**Ambulance services**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11453
Mr David Johnson ..... 11453
**School boards**
Mr Stewart ..... 11454
Mr Snobelen ..... 11454
**Transfer of provincial highways**
Mr Conway ..... 11454
Mr Palladini ..... 11454
**Property taxation**
Mr Wildman ..... 11455
Mr Hodgson ..... 11455
**Labour legislation**
Mr Kormos ..... 11457
Mrs Witmer ..... 11457
**Water cleanup**
Mr O'Toole ..... 11457
Mr Sterling ..... 11457

### PETITIONS

**Assistance to northern Ontario**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11457
**Hospital restructuring**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11458
Mr Silipo ..... 11458
Ms Martel ..... 11460
Mrs Boyd ..... 11460
**Court decision**
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11458
Mr O'Toole ..... 11458
Mr Clement ..... 11460
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Phillips ..... 11458
**Gambling**
Mr McLean ..... 11459
Mr Wildman ..... 11460
**Bear hunting**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11459
Mr O'Toole ..... 11459
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Wildman ..... 11459

### SECOND READINGS

**Public Sector Transition Stability Act, 1997**, Bill 136, *Mrs Witmer*
Mrs Witmer ..... 11461, 11467
Mr Bradley ..... 11466
Mr Christopherson ..... 11467, 11475 11477
Mr O'Toole ..... 11467
Mr Michael Brown ..... 11467
Mr Patten ..... 11468, 11477
Mr Maves ..... 11476
Mrs McLeod ..... 11476
Mr Silipo ..... 11476
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11481

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Government advertising**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11460
Mr David Johnson ..... 11460
Mr Wildman ..... 11461
The Acting Speaker ..... 11461
**Speaker's ruling**
Mr Wildman ..... 11461
The Acting Speaker ..... 11461

**Erratum** ..... 11481


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Lundi 25 août 1997


### QUESTIONS ORALES

**Services en français aux hôpitaux**
M. Grandmaître ..... 11456
M. Villeneuve ..... 11456

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 visant à assurer la stabilité au cours de la transition dans le secteur public,** projet de loi 136, *M^me^ Witmer*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11481

A Z ON
X1
-D23

Government
Publications

No. 219A

Nº 219A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Tuesday 26 August 1997**

**Mardi 26 août 1997**

LIBRARY
AUG 28 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 août 1997

*The House met at 1333.*
*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** The Harris government's tyrannical tactics are once again on display. Now the government is eager to apply the workfare program to seniors and the disabled. Ontario's seniors will be pointing the finger at you, Premier, and your cohorts, who are repeatedly forgetting what you said in your Common Sense Revolution.

You said that you would take seniors and the disabled out of the welfare system and that you would establish a new and separate income supplement program specifically for those unable to work. You stated that funding for this program would be guaranteed at current levels and for seniors and the disabled there would be no cuts.

Now the seniors and the disabled, the most vulnerable people in our province, are once again being made scapegoats of your mean-spirited policies. Slashing the benefits of poor seniors and the disabled by over $400 a month, you're penalizing the most needy group only as a result of your misguided and incompetent government.

Remember, however, that it will be this group that will ultimately judge you, and they will remember your broken promises. They will be there to remind you of the Mike Harris cuts to seniors and the disabled, user fees for drugs, user fees for the sick, less access to medical care. Only a very desperate and frantic government seeks to target the poorest and most vulnerable by slashing their welfare benefits almost in half. Indeed, Mr Premier, the seniors will remember.

### REFUGEES

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** This morning I met with some of the Czech Gypsy families who have arrived in Toronto seeking refugee status. These people are fleeing the violence, the attacks, indeed the murders of Gypsies in the Czech Republic that have, as they have reported to me, been met with indifference by authorities in the Czech Republic.

They have suffered generations of discrimination and violence. One need not go far back into history to recall that Gypsies in the Czech Republic and others were among the millions that were herded into Hitler's abattoirs, into the Nazi camps and ovens. They expect no more than to be treated fairly and with due process under our existing immigration and refugee laws; they deserve no less.

We must condemn the racism that has emerged, that has surfaced, that has reared its tainted, ugly head in response to these tragic people's search for refuge here in this country. I condemn the comments of the ilk of Gordon Chong, who displays himself as a racist in his ill-tempered and evil comments about these people. I tell you, Speaker, if only we could have been a place of refuge for some of those who had been herded into those ovens but 55 years ago. I appeal to all —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much.

### ORILLIA SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** We have options. Past provincial governments lacked the courage to support health care restructuring, and the result is an Ontario lagging behind other provinces in reforming and developing a health care system emphasizing patient services.

We have the option to be like the opposition party, to look at health services restructuring and complain about change and create situations designed to cause fear and anxiety, or we can look at situations where health care providers have taken up this government's challenge and can now add up their accomplishments.

In my riding of Simcoe East, the staff, nurses, doctors and volunteers of Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia have more than met this government's challenges. I am proud to report they have taken the lead and surpassed all. These people know their future lies in satisfied patients and a more informed and healthier community.

With a referral population of 75,000, Soldiers' Memorial closed 12 beds in 1997 and reduced the number of patients waiting more than four weeks for elective surgery by 29%. They have reduced costs wherever possible, saving $40,000 per year on one contract for sutures alone. A recent report of the chairman of Soldiers' states, "Even with service expansions and new programs being added, a balanced budget was once again achieved."

Soldiers' Memorial took the option of creating progress with teamwork, technological advances and quality man-

agement principles. Ontario has provided the blueprint for Soldiers'.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I rise today with regard to the lack of information from the Conservative government and inaccurate estimated financial costs of municipal downloading.

The city of Cornwall writes that your government has not been forthcoming with information about your offloading plans, and requests a meeting with the Premier and Minister Al Leach. Further, the city states that the correspondence received from Minister Leach describing a potential allocation of costs and revenues from Cornwall and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry does not match projected costs.

The city estimates that the government offloading plans will require the city to come up with $18.85 million. Minister Leach said that municipalities assume an extra 2% cut per annum for three years. The city states that they have already reduced staff by 11.28% and the budget by several millions of dollars. Further cuts will result in the elimination of key services. The united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry said provincial estimates are misleading and state that the offloading will cost an additional $18.9 million.

In the Toronto Sun, Minister Leach said there is only one damn taxpayer, but these municipal councils don't want to assume the provincial share.

Premier and Minister, please take the time and meet with these councils to discuss your offloading calculations.

**1340**

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Speaker, you are aware, as is everybody else in this House, of the extraordinary rise in the price of gasoline across this province in the last couple of weeks. I want to speak for just a few minutes this afternoon about the impact on northern Ontario and particularly the impact on the issue of cross-border shopping.

It's absolutely phenomenal, the impact this will have on my community of Sault Ste Marie, which is a cross-border community. It's disturbing given the efforts that were made by governments over the last five to 10 years to try to come to terms with this. You will remember, because you were here as part of the opposition when we were in government trying to comes to terms with the impact the cross-border shopping phenomenon had on many communities in Ontario, that Bob Rae was called the businessman of the year in Buffalo on one of the billboards down at the corner of Dundas.

As government, by your inaction, what you are allowing the petroleum industry to do to the community of Sault Ste Marie is to get us back into that exact position again. We were beginning to feel some relief. As a matter of fact, I was talking to a small business person in the Sault this morning who said this summer she was feeling particularly good about the amount of gasoline she was selling at her small gas bar, and when the Michigan government decided to increase the taxes on gasoline, was quite excited because it meant it would positively impact on our side of the border. But when the petroleum industry came in and whacked us across the head with the increases that they did —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you so much.

## SARNIA ECONOMY

**Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia):** In cooperation with Sarnia's home-town newspaper, the Observer, it's my pleasure to provide all members of this House with a copy of a special Observer edition marking the completion of the second span of the International Blue Water Bridge.

Along with this special edition, I want to extend an invitation to all members to visit our community, which has become the most strategic site for new investment in Canada, as was noted by the Globe and Mail's business magazine a short while ago. Six million vehicles cross the Blue Water Bridge annually, a number projected to double by the year 2000.

The completion of the second span is vital to business and industry and will help promote a healthy tourism environment in Ontario and in my riding.

The $100-million project is testimony to the strong ties we have with our American neighbours. Ontario is open for business, our community is open for business, and through the cooperation of countless individuals and groups, we will be building on the opportunities offered by the bridge.

Exciting things are happening and I encourage all members to visit my riding and enjoy the water, parks and host of cultural activities that make Sarnia a great place to live, work and play.

## ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** It seems that Minister of Transportation Al Palladini is perpetually stuck in neutral. I rise today to remind him that one year ago today a truck accident claimed the life of Kim Wong, who lived in North York. It happened when a runaway truck coming off an exit ramp at Steeles Avenue and Highway 404 crashed into her home. A retaining wall at the end of the ramp could have prevented this tragedy.

It's also been a year since the minister promised he would install a safety barrier at the site to prevent future accidents. To date, he's done nothing to keep his word, and the residents of Meadoways are still living in fear. Our transportation minister just can't get his engine started when it comes to living up to his responsibilities.

You've had a year to act. The residents of Meadoways have made repeated requests for you to do something. All they have received are empty promises.

$30,000, $40,000, $50,000 a year. That is the big cost that students pay by going to university full-time.

We believe we have found the right balance of tuition levels, much cheaper than Nova Scotia but higher than some provinces, given the tremendous payback that comes to students and given the hundreds of millions of new dollars that we're putting into student assistance.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, we are now the lowest funder for our students when it comes to college and university education in the country. Our tuition fees are now the second highest in the country. You understand very well, and I know this, Premier, that our students' chances are much, much better when it comes to getting a job when they have completed a college or university education. What we ought to be doing is making it easier for our students to pursue post-secondary studies rather than throwing up hurdles before them.

Applications are down this year because you've allowed tuition fees to increase by 30% on your watch. Student debt load: Let's take a look at that for a moment. The average student debt load for our students who are graduating is somewhere in the range of $25,000 now. Applications are down, especially when it comes to students who are from poor families. We ought to be doing everything we can to increase those applications.

Again, Premier, if you have to choose between a tax cut and increasing tuition fees, why are you choosing the tax cut?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As you will know, when you were in government, Ontario was 10th and last in the funding of universities; when the NDP were in government we were 10th and last in the funding of universities; and we inherited a situation where we were 10th and last in funding universities. Others, on the other hand, have said we were first in efficiently delivering some of the best university programs in the world. I tend to agree with the latter interpretation, but none the less, nothing has changed in our status between your government and the NDP government and our government. What has changed substantially, though, is this: hundreds of millions of new dollars going into student assistance and working as fast as we can with the federal government to get an income-contingent loan plan.

Yes, tuition fees comprise about 34% of operating revenues for our Ontario universities. We believe that's a pretty sound investment, equivalent perhaps to an investment somebody makes in the average North American car. I suggest four years of university —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** I think it's important for us to keep the record straight. The fact of the matter is that you have cut funding to our colleges and universities by $387 million. You have increased tuition fees for our college and university students by 30%. On your watch we have now become the lowest funder per capita when it comes to post-secondary education in the land, in Canada.

On your watch, 44 out of 50 American states increased funding to their publicly funded universities. What is it they understand? Well, I can tell you what they understand, Premier, something you clearly do not understand: We have to invest in our students in order to ensure that we can compete in the global marketplace. We are going to make it because we have the best educated workforce in the world, and we should accept nothing less.

Once again, Premier, why is it that you've insisted on increasing our tuition fees at a time when, instead of giving us that tax cut, you ought to be making it simpler and easier for students who enrol in post-secondary studies?

**1400**

**Hon Mr Harris:** Of course the tax cut is what is creating the jobs, leading the nation, leading the United States, leading all of North America in job creation, so that when students graduate with a debt equivalent to about a North American car, they'll have a job to pay back that loan, pay back that investment.

Naturally, we are investing about two thirds of taxpayer dollars into their education, and we are asking them to invest about 35% or 34% of the cost of tuition. Why you would relate the biggest job creation measure in Canada, by way of a tax reduction that's actually bringing us more money, with anything to do with that great investment in education — I don't know why you would link that.

But I agree with your statement that we are going to make it here in the province of Ontario. In spite of what we inherited from your government and the NDP government, we are going to make it because we will have the best-educated workforce in the world.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It is in the hope of a better answer that I direct this to the Premier. I want to ask you about your hospital closings. To the perplexity of people all around the province, you have sent the Harris hospital destruction commission to shut down 25 hospitals and you have caused a lot of concern, but right now you're causing some hurt and hardship. The first Harris hospital shutdown is taking place at Northwestern hospital in Metro Toronto.

What they've done is taken out obstetrics and gynaecology and didn't notify anyone. Pregnant women have shown up at emergency and waited as long as four hours to be seen. One woman in critical need had equipment from another hospital sent over by taxi to help her, and they tried to train the nurses on the spot to be able to use that equipment. She didn't get the service until the next day — at some risk to her.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The question?

**Mr Kennedy:** I want to know if you're going to have your health minister intervene and slow down the shutdown at Northwestern, which is going to take place on November 3 of this year, not two years from now and not after —

**The Speaker:** Premier.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** As you know, the Minister of Health doesn't run hospitals, but I would be

glad to have the Minister of Health look into the situation at Northwestern, because indeed we are the government that funds hospitals, and I believe by virtue of that we're entitled to answers from the hospitals.

But I can tell you this: We have absolutely no desire to slow down things the Health Services Restructuring Commission called for, like 5,207 new long-term-care beds, 4,181 long-term-care community spaces, five new MRIs, 30 additional child-adolescent mental health beds by 2003. These are the investments in new, modern hospitals and in health care that we are committed to making in the Toronto area.

**Mr Kennedy:** I think the people of Ontario now can gauge how phoney that list of so-called commitments is. Your restructuring commission told the people of northwest Metro that it would be two years before their hospital was shut down. It told them on your behalf that $55 million would be invested in new community services. Not one penny has been spent and not one penny will be spent, and this hospital will be shut down.

Yesterday two women went into Humber Memorial Hospital to receive Caesarean sections. They were scheduled for 10 am. It took till 11:20 last night, 13 hours later. The only reason they received the service that late is because of the volume. You have stuffed the obstetrics and gynaecology into a hospital, 193 additional births since August and only one extra bed.

Will you stand up and show the people of Ontario —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Transportation, I would ask that you withdraw that comment, please.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I withdraw it, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Kennedy:** You can leave the people of Ontario with a choice here: of believing that either you have a renegade commission that can make all kinds of promises and mean nothing to protect health care, or that we have a Premier and a minister who will stand up for patients and do something about the rushed shutdown of Northwestern hospital. Will you tell us today?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Yes. I've already told you, and now I'll tell you for the second time, I'd be happy to have the Minister of Health look into your allegations, unfounded or otherwise. If they are founded, I am sure the Minister of Health will —

**Mr Kennedy:** They're founded.

**Hon Mr Harris:** You say they're founded, but most of the time it turns out they're not. That's the record of your party, of your leader and your government, so you can understand why we want to check the facts first.

We have accepted the advice of the restructuring commission that called for 4,350 more patients to be served through the cardiac management program; we have accepted their recommendation of an additional $8 million to $10 million to the women's health council for province-wide research and education; we've accepted their recommendation for a Metro-wide rehab network to coordinate access to services; we've accepted their recommendation for the establishment of a children's health network for sick kids to lead in development. It is these investments into modern 21st-century health care that are going to allow Ontario to continue to lead the world in quality health care.

**Mr Kennedy:** Here's something the people of Ontario don't imagine: $22 million was cut from these hospitals, including Northwestern, by you — not imaginary dollars, not the promises you're making that you won't keep, but a real $22 million is gone. It has forced 450,000 people to get substandard care thanks to you, Mr Harris.

This is your chance to show people what you're made of. A woman had to give birth yesterday behind the nurses' station — no curtains, no privacy, in a so-called modern hospital in your Ontario in 1997.

I want your assurance, Mr Premier. Let's find out whether you really mean it. Let's find out whether you're really going to protect patients. Will you give us an assurance that your minister will visit this hospital, will send a team of his staff in there to look at the substandard care that's being delivered, and that he'll do it immediately? Will you give us an assurance today? If not, then the people of Ontario will know that no one is looking after patient care in your government.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I've indicated, and will now indicate for the third time, that I'd be glad to have the Minister of Health, when I talk to him, look into it. I don't know if you're calling for an audit of the hospital — that may be what's required — if you're indicating that is part of the problem, but I am happy to commit to the member to ask the Minister of Health to look into the situation at the hospital.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Yesterday at the AMO conference, municipal politicians laughed at you. You tried to spin your line about your download being revenue-neutral, but they just weren't buying.

To top it all off, you actually claimed yesterday that you would get income distribution programs off the property tax — this from a minister who has piled $1.75 billion in social housing and welfare costs on to the backs of municipalities. That's $1.75 billion in income distribution programs that municipalities never had to pay before.

Minister, you're saying one thing and you're doing another once again. I just want to ask you this: Are you making a pathetic attempt to fool people, or do you really believe that making municipalities pay $1.75 billion amounts to a tax cut?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I think taking $2.5 billion of income redistribution costs off the property tax is a good start. Taking 50% of the education costs off the property tax is a great start.

I told AMO yesterday that in my view, getting social services and education off the property tax was a goal this government would achieve. As the finances of this province improve, we will move in that direction.

Let's talk about what this government has done to date. What did we say we would do? We said we'd eliminate the deficit. We're well on the way. Did we say we were going to balance the budget? Yes, and it's well under way. Did we say we would get education costs under control? We are: $2.5 billion off the property tax and a commitment to go even further when the financial situation of the province continues to improve. All these things were told to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario yesterday, and they know that when this government says it's going to do something —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**1410**

**Mr Silipo:** These are by and large small-c and large-c conservative people across the province and they're laughing at you. When they're laughing at you, you're beyond redemption.

Yesterday you actually admitted that you're downloading $666 million in unconditional grants and that you weren't counting that when you talked about revenue neutrality. You at least admitted that. That's $666 million in tax hikes and service cuts for the people of Ontario, courtesy of Al Leach and Mike Harris. No wonder municipal leaders booed you yesterday when you had the gall to try to blame them for any tax hikes. How can you expect people to believe you when you say that $666 million isn't an issue? How can you crow, as you did yesterday, about lowering your own costs when you've just pushed them on to the property tax base?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Maybe the member of the third party doesn't understand, but I know the president of AMO, Terry Mundell, understood when he stated on May 2, 1997, in the Globe and Mail, "The reality of the situation is that the province told us about a year ago that the $667 million in municipal support grant...was being eliminated." That's the difference of the tradeoff. The municipalities certainly understood that; AMO certainly understood that. We told them yesterday that even if they want to take the $667 million into consideration, that's $667 million on municipal spending in excess of $20 billion, which is certainly less than 3% and a situation that I certainly wouldn't find unsolvable if I were in that position, and neither do the municipalities.

**Mr Silipo:** That's the same Terry Mundell who said he was ambushed when you introduced your download legislation, the one you were supposed to be discussing with him as well as the AMO officials before you introduced it.

Let's talk a little bit more about process. On August 11 you met with the large urban mayors. You and the Premier agreed to undertake a thorough independent assessment of social housing costs that are being downloaded on to municipalities, yet over two weeks later nothing has happened. You've tried to blame the municipalities, but I have a letter here, which I'd be happy to send to you if you haven't already seen it, from Al Unwin, mayor of St Catharines and chair of the large urban mayors, saying that they're ready to go. This was faxed to you two weeks ago.

Tell us today when that study will begin, who will do it and what the terms of reference are. Or is this just another one of your broken promises?

**Hon Mr Leach:** That letter was not faxed to me two weeks ago; it was mailed a week ago Wednesday and it was finally — found that letter yesterday, as a matter of fact. Prior to yesterday, I never saw that letter. Just to let the opposition parties know, I spoke to the mayor of Gloucester yesterday and we had a conversation. I said, "I didn't receive that letter." She said, "Strange, because it was mailed over a week ago." I said, "I'll have my staff look into it; we'll find it." We've got that letter.

I can tell the member of the opposition that the first meeting is set up with the CAOs who have been recommended by the large urban mayors to work with the municipal implementation team. It will take place this week. That's how quickly this government responded.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. I want to return to your answers yesterday to my question where I was asking you to recommend a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire. You said in part that what you wanted to hear was sound evidence of why there should be a public inquiry. I want to raise three of them with you.

First, there was no evacuation for three days. Did the people who were making the decisions have the information they needed, and if not, why not? What information and how we get that information to them is a question that needs to be answered.

Second, the fire wasn't treated as a hazardous material blaze. Therefore firefighters didn't use the same equipment they would have. They weren't decontaminated throughout the fire as they otherwise would have been, and now over 200 firefighters are reporting health problems.

Third, we now know that we have the most toxic hot spot in all of Canada. Don't you think you have a responsibility to find out why that happened, how it happened and all of the measures that you should take to prevent another one?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** The role of the Ministry of Environment is to provide the medical officer of health with all of the necessary information she needs in order to make her decision whether to evacuate or not evacuate. The medical officer of health has told us that she received all of the information she needed to make that particular decision. Therefore my job and the ministry's job was fulfilled to the greatest extent.

With regard to how the firefighters treated the information, which was also shared with the fire chief, who I met with the first day of the fire, he indicated as well that he was getting all of the information he needed with regard to handling the fire. I presume he took that information into account in terms of how he approached the fighting of that fire.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, if you think that answers those three questions and you can sit down and forget about it, you're sadly mistaken. The fact of the matter is the firefighters obviously weren't properly protected for some reason, whatever that might be, because we've got over 200 of them who are reporting health effects.

Your answers in terms of information — why was there an evacuation three days later? Are you saying we can't get that information any quicker, that there's no way to make those decisions quicker? What if someone had died? The whole point is to prevent it.

Minister, I want to turn to what's happening right now. Hardy Wong is reported in the Toronto Star as saying that the money is running out from the insurance company in terms of the cleanup and it may have to stop at the end of the week. If the $300,000 remaining isn't released, indeed that cleanup will stop.

I want to know from you today, will you commit that you'll step in immediately if that money is not released and assure Hamiltonians that not one day of crucial cleanup time will be lost if the insurance company doesn't deliver the $300,000?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I can in fact assure you of that. We are issuing a field order today for that very purpose.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Final supplementary, member for Riverdale.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Minister, let me tell you what your job is. Your job is to protect the health of the people of this province and to protect the environment, nothing short of that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, come to order.

**Ms Churley:** On that note, let me tell the minister some of the unanswered questions which we can't fully say today here in question period.

Why wasn't the site contained properly until July 17? I was able to walk through an open gate. That means anybody could.

Why was the dampening down not begun until July 17, or field order 22?

According to your ministry's project manager on the site, steel from the site has been sent to Dofasco. Your ministry tests are showing MOEE swiping steel up to 300 nanograms per metre squared of dioxins. The guideline for special cleanup is 25. Why has steel from the fire been sent to Dofasco as part of the cleanup when we know now — there's no excuse for this — that it comes from a site that's so highly toxic and dangerous?

Minister, we want to know how the cuts to your ministry have affected this. We have a lot of questions that we want answered —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Riverdale. Please come to order. Minister of Environment and Energy.

**1420**

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As we have said to the residents, who of course have a very, very serious concern about this fire, we will provide them with all the information we have. I've said before that our book is open with regard to the information we have.

There was mention about the security of the site. The city of Hamilton was responsible for the security of the site to July 17. The ministry then took over the responsibility for that site, along with the polluter who is responsible for the site. Then on July 22, we issued an order to be absolutely certain that the Plastimet company was in fact securing the site to our satisfaction. We had people on the site all of that time between July 17 and July 22.

I invite the member and all members from the area to write to me with questions they might have. I know there is concern in the area. There is concern from my caucus members who represent that area. I invite them to write me and I will answer them.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a question for the Premier. I want to return to the question raised by my colleague the member for York South, because I think your answer indicates that you don't fully appreciate the gravity of this matter.

Yesterday in Ontario a young woman delivered her baby in an Ontario hospital behind a nursing station. She was not protected by walls. She was in full public view. There were no curtains to be drawn. Both her safety and her dignity were compromised. I believe she has every reasonable expectation and every right to think that she can attend at an Ontario hospital and deliver her baby in a manner that does not compromise either her safety or her dignity.

This is happening because you are in a mad rush to close Ontario hospitals. Premier, is this what you mean when you tell us that you are leading us into a brave new world of health care in Ontario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No, of course not. As I indicated, I'd be glad to have the minister look into the individual case.

I can tell you that the board, the management and the CEOs of Northwestern, Humber Memorial and York-Finch General are all very supportive of the government funding and of the government transition measures to new, more modern hospital facilities within the province. The view that your critic has expressed is not shared by the board or the management of Northwestern or of any other hospital.

You raise an individual case which would be a concern to all of us, of course. Given that even the best health care and hospital system in the world, which we have in Ontario today, is not perfect, we'd be happy to look into the individual case with a view to trying to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you should understand that this is happening as a direct result of what you're doing to hospitals in Ontario, as a direct result of what you're doing to health care in Ontario. In your efforts to shuffle buildings and numbers and dollars, you've lost sight of patients, and that's what our health care system is sup-

posed to be all about. Fundamentally it's supposed to be there to ensure that neither the dignity nor the safety of our patients is ever compromised.

That has happened and it has happened on your watch. It's a direct result, and there is no question about that whatsoever, of the fact that you are in a mad rush to close one particular hospital, so you have transferred all of the obstetrics cases to another hospital. We are compromising the safety of patients, not only of the mother but of the baby.

Again I ask you, Premier, is this what we can expect to find in your brave new world of health care in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Other than you and your critic, none of the professionals, none of the people involved, none of the hospital boards, none of the CEOs accept your premise. Given that your premise is false and wrong, that makes the question a moot point. If you're interested in what Ontarians can expect —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Just a minute, Premier. Member for Yorkview, if you'd please take your seat, I'd appreciate it. Thank you. Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** If your question has to do with what Ontarians can expect, they can expect that already one of the best hospital and health care systems of the world will be even better in the future.

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Premier and it's also on this particular issue. I don't think, as you are speeding down this track with no regard to what the consequences are for your actions, not taking the time to look at how they're being implemented, you realize what is going on and how it's affecting people.

Do you understand what it would be like for a woman to go in, give birth, to have to do it on the floor behind a counter in a hospital? Do you understand what it would be like for a woman to have to wait for hours and hours for a C-section? Is that the expectation, that you're saying the system will be better?

It's not what the CEOs say. It's not what the hospital boards say, although let me tell you, they're taking you to court to say that you're jeopardizing health care in this province. So you're wrong about that.

What are you going to say to the women who have gone to this hospital expecting to have the services that should be provided under our universal health care system to be able to give birth to healthy children and you, as a result of your cuts and your mismanagement of hospital restructuring, are jeopardizing them and their children and their children's births?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think everybody knows we've increased health care funding in Ontario. I would respond by saying to you that there is a desperate need for restructuring in the health care sector.

**Ms Lankin:** Absolutely.

**Hon Mr Harris:** "I profoundly believe that there is a need to restructure our hospital services, our institutional services" —

**Ms Lankin:** I said that, and I agree with it.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — "and to move resources from the institutional sector to the community sector." Frances Lankin, MPP, Hansard, December 4, 1995, page 1193.

**Ms Lankin:** You see, Premier, you've actually hit the point right on the head. I'm glad you quoted that, because I and my colleagues believe in the need for restructuring in the health care system. But you know what? We would go about it in a different way. We would go about it in a way which cares about —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I can't hear you. It's not a great time for a conversation, regardless.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Why is the clock stopped?

**The Speaker:** The clock was stopped because I considered the government to be interjecting at that point in time.

**Mrs Marland:** Oh, okay. So now we know —

**The Speaker:** Again, it's not any good to have a conversation. If you want to talk about it, we'll talk about it after.

**Ms Lankin:** We believe in restructuring that puts the patient first. Change is needed, but it doesn't have to be this way. Change doesn't have to mean that women are lying in hallways giving birth, waiting for hours to give birth. Your changes have moved ahead so recklessly and without regard to the impact that you are jeopardizing our health care system because Ontarians sooner or later, if they have a substandard public system, will go and buy the services somewhere else. You are setting us on a track to a two-tier system. You are jeopardizing Ontario's health care system. You are the one who's putting the system at risk.

Change is needed, but it doesn't have to be this way. Please understand the consequences of your actions. Please step back from your ideologically driven commitment and look at what is needed in the health care system.

We can help you and we will help you, but you've got to have the guts to stand up and say you've made a mistake, that the system is in jeopardy and that you're going to take another look at it.

**Hon Mr Harris:** The ideology we are following is that I quoted to you from Frances Lankin in Hansard. It's also the ideology on CBC, Howard Hampton:

"Are there too many hospitals in Toronto?

"*Howard Hampton:* You can make a case for the rationalization of the hospital system in Toronto.

"*CBC:* Right. So you don't need all the hospitals, do you?

"*Hampton:* No, you don't."

That's the ideology we are following. In making that ideology, let me assure you that while 16% to 20% of the people agree with your way of doing it, I think 80% of the people in this province agree that if our way of putting people first, of putting the patient first —

**Ms Lankin:** You're not.

**The Speaker:** Come to order, member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — of putting women first, of putting modern health care services first, that in fact —

**Ms Lankin:** You're not putting women first. Don't you stand here and say you're putting women first. You're not.

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Beaches-Woodbine, I warn you to come to order. I won't warn you again.

**1430**

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. One of the main reasons my constituents sent me to Queen's Park was to fix a welfare system that was not working for recipients nor taxpayers. My constituents in Niagara Falls want a system of last resort that helps people get back on their feet and into the workforce.

The workfare program under way in Niagara region is one step in the right direction. But we also want a fair system, one that would ensure that the decisions with respect to eligibility are free to be challenged. Given the scope of changes to our welfare system in Bill 142, some of my constituents have been led to believe the right to appeal will be taken away. Could you reassure them?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Yes, we've been quite distressed at some of the comments that have been made that somehow or other Bill 142 is taking away appeal rights. It is doing no such thing. As a matter of fact, one of the improvements the legislation brings to the appeal process is allowing those individuals who have appeals, who have questions about decisions that have been made, a fast track, if you will, an appeal process that they can access internally so they can get a decision within several days, rather than forcing them in all circumstances to go to a fairly lengthy legal process, which many of them are not comfortable with.

**Mr Maves:** Thank you, Minister, for that clarification.

One of the current policies of our social safety net allows a social assistance recipient who chooses to appeal an administrator's decision to be eligible to receive benefits while their appeal is pending. Will this be the same?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Again the information that some of our critics are putting forward is incorrect. There will remain the authority from the tribunal to authorize interim assistance if there is a need. I don't think most people would object to the fact that people in need should get it. The question is, are they in need? The system is setting up the process to determine that, to ensure those people in need get the interim assistance they require during an appeal process.

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and it is on the subject of Ipperwash and the death of Dudley George. On Wednesday, September 6, 1995, hours before the shooting, your executive assistant was at an emergency meeting which included a very senior OPP officer who was in touch with the command post. Your executive assistant said to that meeting, "Premier, last night," and these were the instructions: "Out of park only — nothing else."

When you were questioned on this last week, you indicated that Ms Hutton had told you she had been in touch with you in North Bay. We've checked the records and it now appears that's incorrect. It appears to us that you were in Toronto on Tuesday, September 5. The day before, which was Labour Day, you had been in a golf match. You were preparing for a cabinet meeting on September 5. The meeting of the cabinet took place on September 6.

Premier, are you prepared to correct the record and tell the public that you were in Toronto on the day in question when that comment was made by you, and can you tell us whether the meeting was face-to-face with Ms Hutton —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think when I was asked the question, I was given a date of the long weekend by the Leader of the Opposition. On the long weekend, I was in North Bay — and I have checked the record now — on the Sunday for the Mike Harris celebration of labour and family picnic and fireworks, which will be held this year as well on Sunday. On the Monday, you're right, I was with the Prime Minister playing in the Canadian Open golf event, and on the Tuesday I was in a similar event at Greystone.

The recollection of Ms Hutton is that she had relayed information to me by phone, and I think everything else is a matter of public record. Any results of any of the meetings that took place were in cabinet on Wednesday where, as you know, the Attorney General suggested and cabinet accepted the advice and the recommendation that we seek an injunction.

**Mr Phillips:** So you were incorrect in saying that on the day of the occupation you were in North Bay. As a matter of fact, it was on September 4, and you were playing golf at that time here in Toronto; you were not in North Bay on the day of the occupation. The following day, Premier, you were briefed on the cabinet meeting. The cabinet meeting on September 6 made a decision on Ipperwash.

Ms Hutton, at the emergency meeting, was very clear on your instructions: "Out of the park only — nothing else." She said she got those instructions from you on September 5. Did you have a conversation with Ms Hutton on September 5? Did you have a meeting with Ms Hutton on September 5? And who else was at that meeting on September 5 when you provided those instructions?

**Hon Mr Harris:** It was a telephone conversation, so nobody else.

## NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the Minister of Natural Resources. Last Wednesday the standing committee on government agencies deferred

voting on the appointment of Norman Seabrook to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. In fact, it was a government member who made that motion, which all the members supported.

I believe they were too embarrassed to support this appointment, because it was clear from what Mr Seabrook has said in the past about the NEC and what he said at the committee that his appointment is totally inappropriate. The fact is, it is unbelievable and frankly appalling that you would even put his name forward for this commission.

You are the minister responsible. You put his name forward. The committee meets again tomorrow morning. My question is, will you withdraw Mr Seabrook's name before it comes up at committee tomorrow morning?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I don't presume to read the minds of committee members. It's a process of the House here.

Mr Seabrook's nomination represents an area that's in the Niagara Escarpment; it's a local area. He supports the plan. He supports the act. He doesn't wish to change the commission. He will give balance to the 17-member commission. I think if you look at the commission, people agree with the appointment of the chair. People think it's a good balance. They realize that we need to improve customer service and represent a wider variety of interests. I'm sure the committee just wanted to take time to look at it.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Minister, you don't get it, do you? You don't understand how inappropriate Mr Seabrook is for this appointment. Let me tell you what your appointee has said publicly: "Terminate the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act." Again: "The notion that the escarpment is a continuous natural environment is inaccurate and is indeed a falsehood." Again: "We question the legitimacy of the biosphere reserve designation." Again, as late as July 19, on CBC Radio: "Seabrook would like to see the commission abolished, its planning authority turned over to local municipalities. He is researching the United Nations document designating the escarpment as a world biosphere reserve, a designation he suspects will lead to forced depopulation."

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Ms Martel:** Mr Seabrook doesn't represent a balance. He represents the furthest thing from what three consecutive governments have tried to do to protect the Niagara Escarpment. He is inappropriate —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Sudbury East.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I know the committee will be looking at it tomorrow and they'll make a decision on that.

I would like to say that there have been a lot of local people in the area who have been affected by the Niagara Escarpment Commission in the past. They've been frustrated by their high-handed tactics and they'd like to see better customer service.

I can tell you that everyone who is appointed to this commission, whether or not Mr Seabrook goes through the process, firmly believes that the Niagara Escarpment is worth protecting, that it's a very beautiful part of Ontario, that it does represent something that's worth protecting. The act won't be changed. The commission will be in place and it will improve customer service.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We would like to give the minister the opportunity to rethink the use of the term "high-handed" with regard to the commission.

**The Speaker:** You can always give him that opportunity, I suppose, but it's not out of order.

**1440**

## HOME CARE

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** My question today is for the minister responsible for seniors in the province. On the weekend there was a story in the Hamilton Spectator concerning the home care program and the possibility that it would end the year $1.1 million in debt. I wonder if the minister can assure this House as well as seniors, the disabled and individuals recovering from surgery as to whether they will continue to receive support in the community program.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** I'd like to respond to the member's question about the article that appeared in the Spectator and assure him that our ministry has been aware of the circumstances in Hamilton-Wentworth. We want to reassure all members of the House who represent voters in that area that we have not and will not be reducing service delivery for home care in these communities.

We want to indicate, though, that this government has clearly set a standard for assessing the actual needs of seniors and the disabled in our communities. We've set up a province-wide accounting system so we can ensure that appropriate service is provided to those in need when they need it and where they need it and where they can receive the best care.

We want to reassure members, based on that article, that we are working with John Connors from the VON to ensure that the budgets of their actual expenditures this year are better suited to the needs in the Hamilton-Wentworth community in the subsequent year.

**Mr Doyle:** I'd like to ask the minister if he can assure the people of Hamilton-Wentworth that they're going to be receiving their fair share of funding in this care spending.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** I want to reassure the citizens of this area that of course they will get their fair share. Unfortunately, the Hamilton-Wentworth home care program has been running chronic deficit problems for a goodly number of years. This is an experience that was recognized by the previous two governments as well. But Hamilton receives its fair share. In fact, they are receiving $113.64 per capita funding in this program, whereas the provincial average is $91. So we believe that we should be working more closely with the deliverers of service.

The CCAC is not up and running yet. We hope to have it up and running soon. It will bring more accountability with publicly elected members on it. Also, they have received $750,000 of additional funding for acquired brain injury and $113,000 of new home care dollars in several programs. We believe that not only will they be getting their fair share but that the program will continue to expand.

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. It appears that while your colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs has been downloading millions of dollars in new costs on to municipalities, you've been doing your share of dumping costs on to school boards.

The most recent example is the fact that your ministry used to pick up 50% of the cost of copyright licences, but this year you've told the boards they're on their own. You save $2 million; they have to pick it up. So much for the promise that there wouldn't be any more cuts this fall.

What is equally distressing is that you may well be using the $2 million you've saved on copyright licences to launch another mega advertising blitz. Is it true that you are about to launch a massive advertising campaign, at a cost of $2 million, to try to convince people that what you're doing to education isn't really disastrous for kids?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Once again the member opposite is engaging in idle speculation. Yes, our government will be communicating with parents and taxpayers this year on the subject of education. No, I haven't approved a budget for that program yet.

I can assure you, as has been the case in the past with this government, our spending on communicating with people will be much reduced from the spending levels of other governments, including the government represented by the member opposite when they were in power, and that communication will be very direct to parents about what is happening in their schools. It will not be the sort of political messaging that your government put out when you were in power.

**Mrs McLeod:** I was really hoping this minister would say it couldn't possibly be true that he was about to spend taxpayers' dollars spinning out to the public his self-serving, fact-distorting rhetoric to try and cover up what is actually going to be going on in classrooms this fall. I was hoping he would tell us he wouldn't be spending money on advertising when students in elementary schools are going to come back to face a new curriculum for which they have no textbooks. Minister, your $2 million that you're about to spend on advertising would buy a set of textbooks for about 2,000 classes across this province.

I was hoping you were going to tell me you weren't going to spend money on advertising when students are going to come back to secondary schools without desks, because your half-billion dollars in cuts to education have forced 30 to 40 students into single classrooms.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mrs McLeod:** I want you to know that any money you spend on advertising is going to be completely wasted on the parents of JK kids who won't be going to school because there is no JK for them this fall.

Will you stop this advertising blitz so you can assure us that every dollar you spend will be —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Fort William.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I don't know where to begin to correct the member, who continually stands in the House and is inaccurate about the statements she makes. Every statement you've made so far this afternoon is simply inaccurate.

Let me tell you, we will be very pleased to communicate to the people of Ontario, to the parents of Ontario, about the new high standards for their students that will be right across the curriculum, from grades 1 to 8 in the province beginning this very year. We'll be glad to talk to them about a new funding model that will meet the needs of every individual student in this province. We will be very glad to talk to them about that.

I can assure you, and every member of this House, that unlike your party when you were in government, unlike you when you were in power, this will not be self-serving self-promotion. I know that's your only experience of this. This will be information for parents, for students and for taxpayers about a new and better education system for the province of Ontario. Our students have waited long enough.

## CHARITABLE GAMING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship. Yesterday you held a press conference about charitable gaming casinos. You said repeatedly that the purpose of this press conference was to confirm that charities were going to be receiving up to $180 million from this new charitable casino scheme. What you wouldn't tell us is what the government was going to get. Simple math from your documents of course tells us that it would be just over $1 billion.

You said repeatedly also that your announcement was about a fair share of charity casino proceeds to the charities. Today, the existing charity casinos produce revenues of just under $100 million and charities get about $10 million; that's just over 10%. The new expanded charity casinos and video slot machines are expected to produce revenues of just over $1 billion and charities are expected to get about $180 million, just over 10%.

Minister, how is this fairer? How can we view this as anything other than the government using charities as a front for a huge grab of money to pay for your ill-timed tax cut?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** Thank you for the question. I find it interesting, coming from a member who represented a government that did absolutely nothing about regulating the gaming industry and also did absolutely nothing about

generating revenues for charities. As a result, we had close to 5,000 events from roving Monte Carlos last year that were completely unregulated, and only an average of 10% of the revenues generated from gaming tables actually flowed to those charities.

The new gaming framework is actually going to benefit charities, moving from $10 million which they receive right now from roving casinos to up to $180 million available to charities and not-for-profit organizations, something they support, something they deserve, something they've been waiting for.

**1450**

**Ms Lankin:** The minister is great at not answering questions. First of all, you're absolutely wrong. Roving casinos were regulated. In fact, we tightened the regulations, and I don't dispute that it's useful to tighten them even further. You say we used to have 5,000 events. Now, with your new scheme, we're going to have 15,000 events a year. This is a massive expansion of gambling.

You said that you consulted. You may have consulted about how to dole out the proceeds. What you didn't consult on was where these casinos were going to be sited. You dictated. My community, the Beaches, is one of the communities that you've dictated will have a casino.

Minister, we have a meeting tonight. Residents Against Gambling Expansion are going to be holding a meeting and they want some answers. Will you consult with my community? Will you put in place a process that will respect the wishes of my community? Will you ensure that my community has a say on this? Will you guarantee that if the municipality passes a bylaw and says no, you won't use any ministerial powers to overrule that? We're meeting tonight. We want to know, will you listen to us? Will you promise me you won't force a casino in the Beaches?

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** Thank you for the question. I'll refer it to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** First of all, with respect to the areas selected, they're catchment areas. That's the second part of the process right now. Once we have people on the short list, they're to go out and consult with municipalities to find an appropriate location.

I really have to beg to differ with the member for Beaches-Woodbine with respect to her statement yesterday. She indicated, "The government refuses to consult with communities like mine in the Beaches about the fact that we don't want a charity casino there in the first place."

I draw her attention to the fact that the member invited Clare Lewis, who is the chairman of the Gaming Control Commission —

**Ms Lankin:** And he has refused to come to the public meeting tonight. How do you answer that, Minister?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Mr Speaker, she invited Clare Lewis on June 17 to a public meeting at Bellefair United Church, which he did attend. He has already been there once to consult with the community in the Beaches.

I would like to —

**Ms Lankin:** That wasn't a public meeting. The public meeting is tonight and he has refused to come.

**The Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, you must come to order.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** My point is that Clare Lewis had been invited to a meeting already once on June 17. He attended to consult with the community. This has happened. The member had stated that this hasn't happened.

Second, I'd like to point out that when the honourable member was the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, back on November 3, 1994, she indicated that prior to the casino's arrival a number of concerns were expressed about issues such as increased crime, traffic etc. She said, though, "During this coming period I would encourage every community that believes it wants a casino to read this report. They will see the success of the casino at Windsor was no accident," and she's encouraging all communities to express —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to register my dissatisfaction with that non-factual answer and ask for a late show.

## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** My question is to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for privatization, who also led this government's auto insurance reform initiative. As the MPP for Simcoe Centre, I have received several calls from constituents who are complaining of high auto insurance premiums because they have been assigned to the high-risk market, or what is known as the Facility Association, by their insurer. I recall hearing that this aspect of the auto insurance system was going to change. Minister, can you tell me when changes to the FA are coming so that I may report back to my constituents?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** To my colleague across the floor, there is a program called FA, or Facility Association as it's known in the industry, that was designed by the previous government to deal with high-risk drivers. That Facility Association framework unfairly deals with drivers because it places them in that high-risk market regardless of whether or not they are deserving to be classified as high-risk drivers, and that's wrong.

There's another component of the high-risk driver market which puts people in a Facility pool and charges them the same as a regular rate even though they are high-risk drivers and they should be paying a higher rate. That particular category is subsidized by the average Ontario driver, who is a good driver, and that's wrong.

We instructed the industry and consumer groups to come to grips with this issue and present to us options and proposals which would deal with re-establishing fairness and equity to the high-risk driver market. They have done

that and my understanding is that the board of the Facility Association has agreed on these new rules and they will be in place shortly.

**Mr Tascona:** I'm pleased to hear that a plan to change the high-risk auto insurance marketplace is coming and that a new system will be in place in the near future. One of the criticisms I have heard from the FA drivers is that they had no idea they were at risk of being placed in the FA and have no idea how they can get out. Will the minister please explain the details of the new plan and its impact on drivers?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** Thank you again for the question. You are indeed right. One of the unfair components of the existing arrangement with respect to Facility Association is that drivers in Ontario don't know what they have to do to get in there and how they can get out of that particular market. We think that's unfair.

Part of the plan we have encouraged the industry to come to grips with is a mechanism so that insureds in Ontario will know what the rules are before they're placed in Facility Association, before they have the accident, before they are faced with the high insurance premiums.

We think that's fair, so our particular plan will eliminate the four-point system which has been wrongly designed by the previous government, and will be a fair and open process so that Ontarians and all Ontario drivers know what will happen if they get involved in accidents and how they will be able to get out of Facility Association should they be so unlucky as to have been awarded that cost.

## PETITIONS

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition signed by a large number of people that reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues such as health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of the elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature, as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

### FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have the following petition to the Honourable Minister of Environment and Energy, Norm Sterling, and the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Mike Harris:

"Whereas a fire at a PVC plastic vinyl plant located in the middle of one of Hamilton's residential areas burned for three days; and

"Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and called for a limited voluntary evacuation of several blocks around the site; and

"Whereas the burning of PVC results in the formation and release of toxic substances such as dioxins and furans, as well as large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold a full public inquiry on the Hamilton Plastimet fire; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, request that the Ministry of Environment and the government of Ontario take responsibility for the immediate cleanup of the fire site."

As the representative for that area, I add my name to those of these residents.

**1500**

### COURT DECISION

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario with over 300 signatures from the town of Innisfil.

"Whereas the Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the legislative authority to restrict going topless in public places; and

"Whereas sections 173 and 174 of the Criminal Code relating to public nudity need to be clarified to provide better protection of community standards;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to clarify legislation on going topless in public places."

I affix my signature.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's a timely one as we enter the long weekend.

"Whereas we, the consumers, feel gas prices are too high throughout Ontario;

"Whereas we, the consumers, support the Ontario Liberal caucus's attempt to have the Mike Harris government introduce predatory gas pricing legislation;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want the Mike Harris government to act so that the consumer can get a break at the pumps rather than going broke at them;

"Whereas we, the consumers, are fuming at being hosed at the pumps and want Mike Harris to gauge our anger;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want Mike Harris to know we want to be able to go to the pumps and fill our tanks without emptying our pockets;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce predatory gas pricing legislation in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps."

Of course I affix my signature to this petition.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to restructure completely the provincial-municipal relationship without having consulted the people of Ontario; and

"This restructuring proposes to download to municipalities the cost of transportation and such critical social services as welfare and long-term care for the elderly and the chronically ill; and

"Removes school boards' ability to tax, eliminating any effective local control of schools and school programs; and

"The government's actions fail to guarantee existing levels of funding and fail to recognize the unequal ability of local communities to bear the cost of these new burdens, thus producing inequitable access to essential services; and

"Whereas the government's lack of meaningful public consultation and disregard for public response pose a serious threat to democracy;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, because we care about the quality of life in our province and the well-being of our children, neighbours and communities, register a vote of non-confidence in the government of the province of Ontario."

I am adding my name to the petition.

## COURT DECISION

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Criminal Code falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government of Canada;

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that women have the lawful right to appear topless in public;

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to meet the needs and requirements of municipal and provincial governments in Canada and to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to urge the government of Canada to pass new legislation or amend existing legislation to ban appearing topless in public places."

This petition is signed by 25 people from Keswick, Sharon and Jacksons Point who are constituents of my riding of Durham-York, as well as others from Newmarket and Fenelon Falls. I agree with this petition and I have affixed my name on it.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas improper catch-and-release methods of sports fishing have a long-lasting effect on any body of water; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources is not encouraging proper management of fish stocks by allowing netting during spawning season, which destroys spawning beds; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources is not encouraging proper management of fish stocks by allowing the size of fish to be retained; and

"Whereas sports fishing of Lancaster perch and other breeds in the greater Cornwall area benefits local tourism, fishing and the overall economy and will continue to do so if managed properly;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Ministry of Natural Resources to impose a seven-inch limit on fish allowed to be kept, not to allow netting during spawning season, and also to reopen provincial parks in the area to encourage tourism and ensure vibrant, long-term sport fishing in our area of eastern Ontario."

I have also signed the petition.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** The following petition was forwarded to me by Cathy Walker, the national health and safety director of Canadian Auto Workers, on behalf of Buzz Hargrove, the national president, and hundreds of auto workers in the Windsor area. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workers' health and safety must be protected in the province of Ontario, especially the right to refuse work which is likely to endanger a worker, the right to

know about workplace hazards and the right to participate in joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations help protect workers' health and safety and workers' rights in this area; and

"Whereas the government's discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act threatens workers' health and safety by proposing to deregulate the existing act and regulations to reduce or eliminate workers' health and safety rights and to reduce enforcement of health and safety laws by the Ministry of Labour; and

"Whereas workers must have a full opportunity to be heard about this proposed drastic erosion in their present protections from injuries and occupational diseases;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the present provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. Further we, the undersigned, demand that public hearings on the discussion paper be held in at least 20 communities throughout Ontario."

On behalf of my colleagues, I attach my name to theirs.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by 369 people throughout the province. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** A similar petition signed by scores of my constituents reads in part:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government to introduce legislation that would make it illegal for a woman to appear topless in any public place."

## WATER CHLORINATION

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** I have a petition signed by over 240 of my constituents from the Milton area.

"Whereas the chemical substance chlorine was added to the people of Milton's pure well water supply in 1995; and

"Whereas the Halton region water delivery system in the town of Milton has received the regular maintenance and standard upgrade requirements outlined by the province and is supported by a standby chlorination unit sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat; and

"Whereas recent studies on the use of chlorine additives in drinking water have raised the spectre of chlorine as a possible cancer agent; and

"Whereas the people of the town of Milton overwhelmingly support the belief that a standby chlorination requirement is sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat;

"Be it resolved that the Ontario government grant the people of Milton's request for a variance allowing only standby chlorination to be used in treating the pure well waters supplying Milton's water delivery system."

I'm proud to add my name to this petition.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** The consumers in Ontario are furious about the high gas prices that are going through the province, especially in northern Ontario, where our prices are higher anyway. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the consumers, feel gas prices are too high throughout Ontario;

"Whereas we, the consumers, support the Ontario Liberal caucus attempt to have the Mike Harris government introduce predatory gas pricing legislation;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want the Mike Harris government to act so that the consumer can get a break at the pumps rather than going broke at them;

"Whereas we, the consumers, are fuming at being hosed at the pumps and want Mike Harris to gauge our anger;

"Furthermore we, the consumers, want Mike Harris to know we want to be able to go to the gas pumps and fill our gas tanks without emptying our pockets,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce predatory gas pricing legislation in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps."

I'm pleased to sign this petition as well.

**1510**

## PAY EQUITY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has introduced Bill 136; and

"Whereas Bill 136 strips entitlements to employee status and therefore pay equity rights for home child care providers; and

"Whereas home child care providers are predominantly female; and

"Whereas home child care providers are one of the lowest-paid groups of workers in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to withdraw Bill 136 and its implications for the Pay Equity Act."

As I'm in agreement, I add my name to theirs.

## COURT DECISION

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"I strongly oppose the court decision passed in the case of Gwen Jacob, which ultimately allows women to expose their breasts in public places;

"I find this behaviour to be offensive both to myself and to my family."

This petition is signed by 10 men and women from Keswick and Queensville who are constituents of my riding of Durham-York, as well as others from Newmarket and Bradford. I agree with this petition and I affix my name to it.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** The people of northern Ontario are also furious about the vehicle registration fee which the Mike Harris government is putting in as a tax grab on northerners starting September 1. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north, fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that indeed northern Ontario residents do not want nor need the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

I'm pleased to sign my name to that petition.

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSITION STABILITY ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 VISANT À ASSURER LA STABILITÉ AU COURS DE LA TRANSITION DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 136, An Act to provide for the expeditious resolution of disputes during collective bargaining in certain sectors and to facilitate collective bargaining following restructuring in the public sector and to make certain amendments to the Employment Standards Act and the Pay Equity Act / Projet de loi 136, Loi prévoyant le règlement rapide des différends lors des négociations collectives dans certains secteurs, facilitant les négociations collectives à la suite de la restructuration dans le secteur public et apportant certaines modifications à la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et à la Loi sur l'équité salariale.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I'm pleased to resume debate and continue my leadoff remarks on Bill 136. I would again remind everyone who is watching that, as a result of the government's changing of the rules, there's no longer the same time opportunity there once was, just last week, to speak in opposition on behalf of the very people who are being hurt by the legislation this government brings down, limiting our leadoff speeches to 60 minutes from 90, and also all speeches after this to 20 minutes, and after seven hours only 10 minutes. I say very clearly that anyone who thinks that 20 minutes for any one of us to speak to Bill 136 or Bill 99 or the downloading omnibus bill you dropped in the House here late Thursday, if you think that's fair, then you have a very strange definition of fair.

The Minister of Labour continually talks about being fair and wanting to be fair and balanced, but proceeds step by step to remove the word "fair" from legislation that affects workers, such as the Ontario Labour Relations Act, where the word "fair" was taken out of the preamble. You say you care about being fair; you took the word "fair" out of there. They did the same thing in the new Workers' Compensation Act, the whole new bill they brought in, the bill that's bigger than the existing legislation. They took out the word "fair." I think that speaks volumes as to the agenda of this government.

I want to begin my comments today by referring to the newspaper clippings that come across all our desks. It's interesting: The first page of today's clippings is from the Globe and Mail. It's one of their front page stories and it reads, "Ontario Urged to Withdraw Bill 136 Pending Dialogue." That's from AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. That is the provincial umbrella group that represents all of the municipalities. It's much like the counterpart of the Ontario Federation of Labour, which represents all of the workers in this province under one umbrella group.

What's interesting about AMO taking this position is, first of all, it's mostly Conservative types who are on municipal councils who tend to go to AMO. As I mentioned yesterday, I was a member of AMO and I attended. I know the makeup of the partisanship, where there is one, and where it's not formal partisanship, an awful lot of municipal councillors and aldermen tend to be small-c conservatives. This government had every reason to expect that they would get the support of this group of people who tend to be open to the kind of messaging that the Mike Harris Tories give out. Yet look what happened: They took exactly the same position the Ontario Federation of Labour took.

What's fascinating about this is the fact that the two groups that are affected by Bill 136 are AMO and the OFL — AMO representing the municipalities, OFL representing workers. That's who this bill addresses, and those are the very groups that have opposed this government's ramming through of Bill 136. Yet this government purports to be listening to the people. They aren't listening. If they were listening, then beginning today, the opening of this session, the Minister of Labour would have stood in her place and said: "We have

listened. We've listened to the Ontario Federation of Labour, we've listened to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and since they're the very people who are affected by this bill, we will withdraw it and we will commence dialogue with these partners to find an alternative that is acceptable." But that didn't happen.

Just a few minutes ago, orders of the day, wham. They've made up their minds. This train's going down the track. They don't care what anybody says. They don't care what anybody does. They aren't listening. What's so discouraging for the municipal councillors and aldermen and the representatives of the workers within the Ontario Federation of Labour is that they know the implications of what you're doing. You don't seem to, or if you do, you don't care — but they know the implications. They know the results in our communities. They know there's going to be chaos throughout the public service in our municipalities. They also know it doesn't have to be this way. That's what's so infuriating: It doesn't have to be this way.

Who will you listen to? Bill 136 affects municipalities and the workers who work for them. Both those groups have formally said, "Stop, pull back and talk." But you're not doing that. What does it take? Maybe the doctors should help out. They have the ability to get your attention. We know that the fact that the police are offside with Bill 136 has got you pretty upset. Sure, you'd just love to hive them off as a separate group and maybe give them some kind of exemption or exception, because you don't want that kind of dynamic, that kind of politics, where the cops are going against Mr Law and Order himself, Mike Harris.

But the police, just like firefighters, just like every other public servant who was taken in — and I say that very clearly and very emphatically — by this government's bumper slogan campaign in 1995 — "Don't worry, we'll solve all the problems neat and quick. We've got the guts to do it. We'll even throw in a 30% tax cut to boot. Aren't we wonderful?" — all those people who got taken in are now realizing they were betrayed.

We have had elected representatives of the police unions and elected representatives of the firefighters unions come forward in formal public hearings of committees of this Legislature and they have said very directly, "We were betrayed." When are you going to start listening? You say you're listening, but you're very good at the words, you're very good at saying what you think people want to hear and hoping that they never analyse it beyond that.

It's like the ads you ran earlier this year, all those fuzzy, feel-good kind of ads where Mike Harris was there with his casual shirt and jacket by the arena, walking along by the hospital. That didn't work. You thought it would. You thought that people were so — what? — easily fooled again that you ran those ads. They were an insult to the people of this province and they did a lot more harm to you than they did good.

**1520**

But what does it take for this government to realize 136 is a disaster for our communities? Is it that you want the confrontation? Certainly we can't help but think you do, that somebody back in the back rooms has determined a strategy that says, "Hey, if we can force some people to be fighting for their jobs and fighting for a decent standard of living, maybe we can be successful at labelling them again as special interests and put all the blame on them." It certainly seems that way, because when you listen to the words that the Minister of Labour uses, she talks about the fact that she wants to provide incentives for bargaining, that she wants to encourage bargaining and that she's giving the tools and processes for bargaining.

Yet there's no bargaining going to take place under this bill. This bill provides for the fact that if the employers believe they need the upper hand in negotiations, all they have to do is say, "We're taking it to the commission," the Dispute Resolution Commission, the handpicked commission of Mike Harris and his cronies. By the way, that also eliminates any ability for those workers to fight for themselves and fight for what they have fought for for years, because you will eliminate their right to strike. While that may sound good to people, what it means is the collective agreements, the standard of living of those workers and their families, and therefore their communities, is going to go down.

You've done nothing to enhance the lives of working people and their families. You've done a lot to help those who already have a lot. They're doing quite well, thank you very much. Everything else you've done is to lower people's wages, lower their income, lower their standard of living. Even in 136 you take a shot at pay equity, the pay equity legislation, which is there to provide some assistance to whom? The very people who are most vulnerable.

Again you speak the words. The minister and the Premier stand up and with those calm voices say: "We care about people. We want to help them." It sounds an awful lot like Ronald Reagan. But the reality is, your legislation, as your attack on pay equity within Bill 136, will lower the standard of living of women in this province. That's a fact. The legislation is there to provide some assistance to those who are among the lowest paid in our province who do some of the most important work. That's what it does, and you're attacking it in 136; and you're eliminating the employee wage protection plan. Neither of these has anything to do with Bill 136 and its purported reasons, by the way. This is just a drive-by shooting to take a shot at a couple of more opponents that exist out there, legislation that helps people, on your massive drive to this downloading.

Before I leave the employee wage protection plan, I just want to say there was a reason that was one of the first pieces of legislation that our government brought in. I think reasonable people would agree there was good reason for it and that there are better reasons for leaving it in place. With all the globalization, free trade, all the change that's happening around us, we've seen an acceleration in plant closures, office closures, relocations, bankruptcies.

In too many of those cases severance pay isn't paid that's owed, termination pay that's owed isn't given, wages that are owed aren't given, vacation pay that's owed isn't given. Workers have probably been told in the

weeks and months leading up to the closure: "Don't worry. Just give us a few weeks. We'll catch up with you. You know we'll make it good. We've been a good employer. We wouldn't do that to you." Then they lower the boom: "Your job is gone, and the eight weeks of pay we owe you and the termination pay and severance pay are gone."

Oh, and by the way, while they're going through the process of deciding who gets how much money out of whatever is left over, particularly in the case of a bankruptcy, workers are at the end of the line. Creditors are taken care of. The banks, those suffering institutions that only made $6-billion-plus last year, are up near the front of the line. Other financial institutions are up near the front of the line. But you know what? If they don't get their immediate payout from that closure, they're still going to open the doors the next day. They've got more than enough cushion to survive this.

I'm not saying they shouldn't get their money — they should — but in terms of priority, a worker, who in many cases lives paycheque to paycheque, can't afford to be ripped off for weeks of pay or years of loyal service in terms of termination and severance pay. They can't afford that, so our legislation said: "Look, rather than you being at the end of the line all the time, hoping for a few crumbs which usually don't come, and ending up in debt, maybe losing your house, putting all that pressure on you" — can you imagine being 50 years old, facing that kind of situation, wondering what your future is? You're owed all this money, you've got all the bills stacked up, and a program that was there to help you has now been eliminated. At the same time you're reading headlines announcing, "Bank Profits At Record High." How would you feel if it happened to you?

We brought in legislation that said: "This is enough. This is the 1990s. Look, what we're going to do is we're going to provide a fund where those workers will get the money they're owed under the law. They've worked for it, they're entitled to it, and the government is going to provide them with the protection they should have, because who else has the power and the strength and the ability to do it for them?" If that individual can't do it, they need to count on the government to represent their interests. This is not a handout, this is money they've worked for and they're owed. They're owed that money, so there's a fund there where they are given the money they're legally entitled to.

For a bunch of law-and-order types you'd think that was a good idea, that the law is being upheld. Then the government will use the authority and power it has to go after the people who should have paid that bill. They may or may not be successful — I don't know; you can't get blood from a stone — but there's a lot better chance of the power of the Ontario government getting that money that's owed than there is of one 50-year-old worker who has been just tossed on the social scrap heap, probably for the rest of his life.

That's what that plan did. You killed part of it in earlier legislation and you kill the rest of it in Bill 136. I honestly don't know how you live with yourselves doing that. That's $25 million that you've taken, in my opinion stolen, out of the pockets of people who are in arguably the worst financial crisis of their lives, through no fault of their own, and they're legally entitled to what you're now going to deny them. Legally entitled; they worked for that money.

It's not even as if we're arguing for something new. It's already there. We did it. We put it in place. You're taking it away. Yet the Minister of Labour and the Premier have the audacity day after day to stand up and say, "We care. We care so much about people. We care about the most vulnerable and we're going to make our labour legislation the best there is and the health care the best there is," and on and on to the point where it's so nauseating that sometimes the toughest part of being in this position is looking at you people every day and listening to you saying one thing and doing another.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I feel sorry for you.

**Mr Christopherson:** I feel sorry for the people of this province. Never mind me. You don't need to feel sorry for me. I'll tell you who you ought to feel sorry for. It's the people who are being hurt by your legislation and the chaos you're going to cause in our communities as a result of Bill 136. That's who you ought to feel sorry for. Rather than talk about it, you ought to do something about it.

I want to finish off my opening comment with regard to AMO and why they've done this. It's interesting that on the front page of the Toronto Star the headline is "Laughter Greets Leach's Pledge." What was that pledge? I'm quoting from today's Toronto Star:

"The province's plan to pass more social costs on to municipalities won't hurt property taxpayers, Municipal Affairs Minister Al Leach insisted yesterday.

"But the reply that echoed back to him from a packed meeting of municipal leaders was derisive laughter."

**1530**

These are not the kinds of people who do something like that lightly. If anything, they give ministers of the crown more than the benefit of the doubt. But they did it in this case because it's so patently untrue and unfair for this government to suggest that municipalities aren't going to be hit, and hit hard, as a result of your downloading. For the minister to say, "Don't worry, it won't cost anything," they knew that's not the case in all of their individual and collective municipalities. That's not the case.

How does that tie to Bill 136? Real neat. I've never accused your strategists of being stupid — mean-spirited and a lot of other things but not stupid — because the game plan here is, while your government is attempting to bludgeon municipalities and trying to set a political stage where they wouldn't dare raise property taxes to offset the cuts you've made, you provide them with Bill 136, where you were expecting and hoping, and for all I know, urging them to take that money out of the standard of living of the people who work in that community, who provide the public services. Bill 136 makes sure it can be done because they don't have to bargain at the bargaining table.

They just say, "No, we'd rather use the Dispute Resolution Commission." Zing, bang, it goes off to the commission, handpicked by Mike Harris, and they're bound by the decision that commissioner makes. You can't even have a judicial review, you've made it so airtight.

All of this downloading that municipalities are angry about and laughing at your minister for suggesting it's not going to cost anything is expected to be borne on the backs of the people who work in that community and who have committed no other crime than to get up and go to work every day providing public services in their community. That's their crime, and for that crime the sentence and the punishment of this government is, "Your standard of living goes down."

What is so infuriating is all of this is being generated, the cut in the first place to the municipalities, so you can find the $5 billion to pay for your tax cut; a tax cut which, at best, is giving the average working middle-class family a couple of cups of coffee a week while a lot of other people are doing very, very well, thousands of dollars in tax relief, an income tax gift. That's what's going on with Bill 136, and I'll be listening intently to people who suggest, in whatever way they want, that's not the case. We can quibble over details, we can split hairs, talk technicalities or talk the overall macro, but there's no doubt in anybody's mind that this is what's going on.

You have to find that $5 billion. You cut billions of dollars in transfer payments to municipalities, tell them they can't raise taxes, don't want them to lower services in the community and provide them with a legal mechanism to take that same money, that same 30% tax cut, out of the pockets of those working middle-class families. That's the name of the game, that's what's going on with Bill 136 and that's why the Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates representing working people are so angry.

AMO is angry that you're going to cause all of this turmoil and chaos in their communities. We know that well over 90% of all collective agreements are settled without any need for a strike or a lockout. In the vast majority of cases there's an excellent working relationship between employers and their representatives, the unions that are there, whether that's private or public sector.

You're going to cause that turmoil because you want to force the municipalities to take the money out of the workers in that community because you know that if the municipal councils have to raise property taxes, they're going to blame you. You're going to be held accountable for property tax increases, and that's why you don't want the money to come from anywhere else other than from workers.

I have about 10 minutes left. I want to refer again to an article that Judy Darcy, the national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, wrote in the Globe and Mail just a couple of weeks ago. In part she says: "I guess the Harris government's oft-repeated claim that it wants 'less government interference in people's daily lives' doesn't apply to workers." Isn't it interesting, when you want to use that bumper sticker slogan, "Get the government out of people's faces, get the government off their backs, get them out of the way," it doesn't apply when you feel the need to interfere in a huge way in the standard of living of hundreds of thousands of working people.

You don't like red tape and you don't like bureaucracies, but you're creating two new ones. We don't know how many millions of dollars these commissions are going to cost. As I said yesterday in my remarks, this commission is there not only to make these decisions that gut collective agreements — and by the way, they can do whatever they want to a collective agreement; it's not just wages. They can do anything they think is appropriate and nobody can appeal the decision. Not only is that what they're going to do, but they are going to be handpicked by the cabinet to ensure that there's no doubt that is what they are going to do, and after they make that decision, this government expects them to take the heat. I realize I'm repeating myself from something yesterday but I think it's so crucial to say and it's such an important part of all of this.

Just as we watch the health minister stand up when he's asked questions about closing down hospitals and the chaos it's causing because of the way you're doing it — not the fact that we have to make changes; that's a given. It's the way you're doing it and the rush and the lack of consultation and consideration for the implications that every time one of us asks the Minister of Health a question about that, he stands up and says: "I didn't make that decision. That was the commission. They did that, not me, not Mike Harris, not Elizabeth Witmer. Oh no, we didn't do that. We wouldn't do that. Oh no. It's that commission. They're making all those decisions, and what can I say? The law prohibits me from saying anything about it."

They conveniently forget that they not only appointed the commissioners, but it's their law. We didn't have such a commission until they brought in — remember it — the omnibus bully bill, Bill 26. That's what gave life to the Health Services Restructuring Commission, that evil body that somehow Mike Harris doesn't have to take ownership for. That's where that came from and these two commissions are spawned from the same thinking. Every time there's a controversial decision that comes out of that commission you can bet apples to dollars that the Minister of Labour is going to stand up and say: "I didn't make that decision. It was that commission. They did it. It's those bad people. We wouldn't do that."

We need to remember, Bill 136 — this is the moment in time, right now, second reading, there's only one more reading to go and it will happen quick enough given your new rules — that's where those commissions come from. They are created by this government, they will be appointed by this government and they're bloody well going to be held accountable by this government.

I want to read one more quote from Judy's article because I thought it was one of the best pieces I've seen in terms of exposing what's really going on with Bill 136. She goes on to say: "This dictatorial approach is supposedly necessary to get Ontario smoothly through its current restructuring."

Remember, that's the guise that the government's putting forward as to why they're doing this: "We have to do this because, you know, those irresponsible public sector workers will just strike at the drop of a hat, because that's the way they are." That's the suggestion this government makes.

As Judy points out in her article, if that's what they're arguing, she says, "But if the bill is to facilitate restructuring, why does it cover all workers in essential services (hospital workers, firefighters, police) permanently?" If it's only for a transitional time, why is there anything in Bill 136 that's permanent? We know why. And why is it being imposed on groups of workers such as those in private sector nursing homes who are not even involved in the government's restructuring?

**1540**

As I pointed out yesterday, she says earlier in the column that she's not aware of any strike that was caused as a direct result of restructuring. So not only is your argument bogus, but even if it had some validity, what you're doing cannot be rationalized in terms of responding to that concern. None of it washes, but you want to keep hoping and praying that it's all attached to your bumper-sticker slogan which says, "We have to streamline and provide for the efficient transition," and all your other spin phrases, and you want to encourage bargaining. Oh, it sounds so reasonable when presented by the minister, truly it does. They just want to help people.

Look at their track record. Of course they want to help people. Look at the big benefit they gave to the poorest of the poor in our province. Their first hand up was to cut their income by 22%. What is their helping hand to injured workers? They're going to cut their pension contributions by 50%, cut their income by 5%, and oh, by the way, out of the $15 billion they're cutting from injured workers, $6 billion goes back to their corporate friends.

They took away successor rights from OPSEU and caused that awful strike that didn't need to happen because you're getting ready to privatize everything, so when you do privatize that public sector — and you'll sell off the most profitable to your corporate pals — the collective agreement doesn't go with it; standard of living, wages, benefits don't go with it; seniority doesn't go with it; certainly those employees don't go with it. Other workers out there get the benefit of being able to bid the lowest wage they can live by in order to get that job. That's the world you're creating with that piece of legislation.

Then, of course, you moved on to non-union people, people who don't have the benefit of a collective agreement. The Employment Standards Act, the bill of rights for workers, you've started to gut. You're only halfway through that process. You took away rights from people who have no protection at all, the most vulnerable.

Somehow through all of this you expect people to believe that you're only doing this to protect — well, you like to separate people by saying there's the taxpayers and then there's everybody else, as if the taxpayers are a separate group. Among those taxpayers are hundreds of thousands of public sector workers, and there are also, unfortunately, tens and hundreds of thousands of poor people. There are also an awful lot of people who may be earning a middle-class income who are watching their education system under attack, their health system under attack, who are about to see chaos in their communities, services cut.

If you've got a middle-management job and you're thinking, upon listening to any of this, "None of that has anything to do with me; they're always worried about those who have nothing and prepared to take away from anybody who has anything at all," the reality is that if you've got a half-decent paying job in this province, you'd better hope that other people are getting a half-decent wage or you won't be able to justify what you're getting. You will if you own the company or you're on the board of directors, but if you're in middle management somewhere, you'd better pray that somebody else is making something close to you or you're next, because you won't be able to justify earning the pay you're so pleased with right now. God bless you, go for it, that's fine, but don't think that other people can have a decent standard of living taken away from them and you're going to remain untouched.

For those who may earn less than those in the public sector who are saying, "They have already got everything, they've got the union to protect them and everything is fine for them and they've got all these benefits," I urge you to think about this: The only chance you've got, if you don't have that collective agreement, of getting decent pay and decent benefits and decent protections is if there's a strong labour movement fighting for you. Mike Harris sure as hell isn't going to fight for you, you can count on that, and he's not going to pass one piece of legislation that makes your life any better. He has proven through two years of governing that you don't count. So you've got a vested interest in this.

I would suggest that it's in everyone's interest to care about Bill 136 and what it is going to do in our communities. That's why the Ontario Federation of Labour is standing up for working families, and that's why AMO has had the courage to stand up and say no to this government, no to this attack on standards of living, no to the attack on the quality of life in our communities and no to Bill 136.

Minister of Labour, withdraw this bill and stop the confrontation and chaos we're heading into.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** That speech would be very impressive if it had been made 20 years ago when there was an entirely different situation in this province than there is today. The fact is that the last time I spoke to the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour and asked him the percentage of people working in this province who were involved with unions, he gave me the answer, which I already had a feeling for in terms of the range of the percentage. He told me it was 33%.

We just listened to the yelling from the former speaker. Actually, his speaking is always more effective when he doesn't yell, but he chose to yell. He is still talking about

33% of the workforce in this province. Isn't it interesting that he is speaking as a member of the New Democratic Party which, when they were the government, actually violated to the greatest extent that has ever happened in the history of this province the legally binding position of unionized employees, with the social contract, the first time that contracts had been thrown out the window? There was no respect, no regard. Nothing was sacrosanct.

Now he's standing up and saying that everything we're doing in Bill 136 is against the unions, against everybody and everything. Of course that's the role of opposition, and I respect that this is the role he wants to put on the record in this place. But some of the accusations about what our government is trying to do with Bill 136 frankly are inaccurate. He is suggesting that we have a hidden agenda, for example. There is no elimination of successor rights, and there's no unilateral removal of bargaining rights.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

**Mrs Marland:** I will continue the rest at the next opportunity.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I'm certainly glad to have a short opportunity to compliment the member for Hamilton Centre on his remarks relating to Bill 136. He always speaks with a great deal of passion about the issues of concern to him and to those of us in the opposition as well.

In terms of 136, it's difficult to know where to begin, other than to go back to the process of the downloading as it began with mega-week back in January 1997. It really does all tie in, because ultimately what the government ends up saying is that this is what the municipalities want.

First of all, regardless of whether you're talking about Bill 136 or a variety of other bills, it certainly isn't what the municipalities want. It's ultimately what the municipalities may have to have to deal with the horrendous consequences of the downloading. It's not fair to say they want that.

As the critic for culture, I can use as an example Bill 109, the Local Control of Public Libraries Act. The government is saying the municipalities want this. They don't want it; they're being put into a position where they may have no choice but to have these powers.

Having said all that, the truth is that with Bill 136, yesterday the Association of Municipalities of Ontario made it very clear that they want the government to withdraw this piece of legislation. They recognize that this legislation ultimately will cause great chaos between the employers and the labour groups in our community. They are convinced that's the case, and this resolution was really quite astounding to see. If the government is truly listening to AMO, they will consider withdrawing Bill 136 for that reason.

There are various other aspects that are of great concern. The police associations — I met with the Thunder Bay Police Association in Thunder Bay, and the Ontario Provincial Police — are very concerned that they're part of this bill at all. I hope I get an opportunity later to speak at greater length, but the fact that they are in there on a permanent basis in terms of the Dispute Resolution Commission is a complete insult to them.

**1550**

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I want to congratulate our critic, the member for Hamilton Centre, on his 60 minutes of comments on Bill 136, at the same time as AMO is having a bearpit session, right now. They're raking Leach and Snobelen and a number of other ministers over the coals. I'm sure they're saying exactly the same things our critic is raising here.

The headlines are saying the same thing: "Mayors Accuse Leach of Misleading Public," in the Toronto Star; "Tories Accused of Municipal 'Tax Grab,'" by the NDP leader in the House yesterday; "Laughter Greets Leach's Pledge," to the AMO convention yesterday.

People are telling the Conservative government that it should withdraw Bill 136. It's an attack on all the workers who work in the health care sector, the hospitals, the education sector and the municipal sector. It's a direct attack on their rights, taking away their right to negotiate.

You're going to have a commission that's going to be set up by friends of Mike Harris. His golfing buddies are going to make the final decision on what money these workers are going to get as we go through downsizing and amalgamation and dumping on all the municipalities.

When you're dumping on the municipalities, it means that the provincial government under Mike Harris is actually — it's a tax grab. What they're doing is they're taking millions of dollars away from municipalities in asking them to pay for these services and transferring all kinds of extra responsibilities over to them so they do not have to be blamed themselves for raising taxes. They're going to say, "It's the municipal leaders that are raising taxes on all the property owners in this province," and it's Mike Harris that is doing it.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'd like to comment on the speech made by my friend the member for Hamilton Centre. I have a great deal of respect for the member. I certainly disagree with him on just about every issue that comes up, but I certainly wouldn't question his motives.

The goal of Bill 136 is to ensure an effective transition resulting from the current restructuring going on. Bill 136 is designed to encourage collective bargaining and to ensure the public continues to be able to count on those services that are essential to it.

The various speakers have mentioned AMO. There's an interesting quote here from Terry Mundell, president of AMO, on June 5, that employers, in this case the municipalities, want to settle contracts with their unions and avoid using the DRC altogether. "I think it's in the employers' best interest to be bargaining in good faith and I think you really want a made-at-home solution." That's certainly a very interesting comment.

We'll certainly listen to those comments, as I know all my colleagues will meet with constituents in their ridings and listen to those concerns and bring them back to the debate.

Labour relations policies are never easy. I can say directly to the member for Hamilton Centre that our government could have done it the way his government did. That was 32 tax increases, an $11.3-billion deficit, a $100-billion debt. There's no social justice in borrowing money in the names of our children — no jobs, no hope and no opportunity. We could have followed the example of his government, the government he served as a member of the cabinet. In fact, a good number of cabinet ministers from the previous government are sitting opposite.

We could have brought in the social contract, totally banned collective bargaining altogether. We could have brought in the social contract and said, "Listen, there'll be no public hearings anywhere in the province of Ontario, zero," let alone to complain that an hour isn't enough to make a point.

We could have taken that approach, the most anti-labour, anti-collective bargaining position ever brought in. Even the heads of the trade unions who sit beside you in this debate today go on and say that was the worst piece of legislation ever brought in. So we watch what they do, not what they say.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, two minutes.

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the responses. I don't necessarily like them all, but I appreciate the fact that people seem to be at least listening.

I want to thank my colleague from Cochrane North. I know his hard work and commitment to working people is next to none.

To the member for Port Arthur, I appreciate his comments. I would say very directly to the police, and based on my past affiliation, I hope very much the police don't succumb to any enticement this government might give to hive them off from the other working people of this province who are being hurt by Bill 136. I know they have an obligation to represent their people, but everyone else affected by this needs the credibility and clout they can bring to this fight and I implore them to do that, and the same with the firefighters who carry a lot of credibility in this province.

You heard the spin coming from the member for Nepean when he said people need to be able to count on the services, and the implication there is it's those awful workers who are going to withdraw their services because they're selfish and greedy. That's the subliminal message that's carried in "count on the services."

If you care that much about services, don't cut the transfer payments. Make sure municipalities have a fair and decent amount of money so they can provide the services and none of this would be necessary. Your argument on the debt and deficit loses so much and you people know this in your hearts when you give $6 billion of revenue back with the tax cut. If you'd done that after the books were balanced, it would make a lot better argument than trying to do it now.

To the member for Mississauga South, let me say that when you say elimination of successor rights and collective bargaining is preserved, again it's the bumper sticker. Underneath that, the fact is that once it goes to the commission, there's no collective bargaining, it's collective begging. That's why you may have a fight you've caused on your hands.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I'm happy today to rise and have this opportunity to address the House on issues surrounding Bill 136, and I will address the bill.

As the Minister of Labour has told members, Bill 136 will assist employers, employees and unions in municipalities, school boards and hospitals across Ontario to implement a smooth and timely transition as they restructure to provide better public services that are more accountable to taxpayers.

One section of Bill 136 outlines the temporary processes through which employers, employees and unions can determine solutions to such issues as bargaining unit structure in the new amalgamated or merged workplace; which union, if any, will represent the workers; the determination of seniority, including the fair treatment of any workers who were non-unionized prior to the amalgamation or merger; and which collective agreement or terms of employment will govern the workplace until a first contract is negotiated and put in place.

Bill 136 stresses negotiations between the workplace parties in the determination of these issues. Our government has always maintained that locally negotiated and agreed upon solutions are best. It is to everyone's advantage, since the agreement of both sides to a contract results in more commitment to the outcomes.

It is only if negotiations are unsuccessful that the Labour Relations Transition Commission will step in and assist the parties in reaching a solution, and in reaching a decision, the commission will have clear guidelines that draw on currently accepted labour relations practices, practices that have the support of both labour and management.

Bill 136 is a balanced and reasonable approach that ensures all employees are treated fairly during this time of transition. It ensures that labour relations issues are quickly resolved with no or minimal disruption to important public services that taxpayers need and pay for.

I would also like to point out that these measures are temporary. They draw on Ontario's long-standing tradition of collective bargaining and only apply to the first contract in an amalgamated or merged municipality, school board or hospital. Once the first contract is resolved and put in place, traditional collective bargaining processes will resume.

I'd now like to focus my remarks on the permanent reforms in Bill 136, the reform of the current system of contract arbitration in the police, fire and hospital sectors, essential services sectors that do not have the right to strike. These reforms are necessary and overdue. Both employers and labour organizations in these sectors have been asking for change for a long time. The current process is unwieldy, overly legalistic and leads to unacceptable delays.

Allow me to outline how the current process is applied in the hospital sector. More than 160,000 unionized employees work in hospitals, homes for the aged and nursing homes. These employees fall under the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act, otherwise known as HLDAA. There are nearly 1,700 separate collective agreements under this act. Employees covered by HLDAA bargain under the normal provisions of the Labour Relations Act, all the way through conciliation. It is only when the two parties reach an impasse that the provisions of HLDAA govern.

**1600**

Here are the steps that take place, and if the honourable members think it is exhausting just to listen to them, think of how it must feel during the negotiations.

Notice to bargain is given within 90 days of the expiry of a collective agreement. Either party can request a conciliator, who is then appointed by the Ministry of Labour. The conciliator reports to the minister within 14 days after appointment.

If they are unable to reach an agreement, either party can then refer matters to arbitration. Once the matter is referred to arbitration, an arbitration board is put together. The parties then have seven days to appoint sidespersons. These are people who sit on the board as the nominees of unions and employers. The sidespersons then appoint a chair to the board within 10 days.

If they are unable to appoint a chair, they notify the Ministry of Labour. Then the minister appoints a third person who is, in the opinion of the minister, qualified to act in the proceedings. The minister may also replace a member of the arbitration board if in the opinion of the minister that member fails to carry out duties in such a way as to enable the board to render a decision within a reasonable time.

The parties pay their own costs and share the cost of the chair, regardless of whether they choose the chair or the chair is appointed by the minister.

Now, finally, the process is ready to reach a decision, but it's not that simple. The decision does not come quickly. In fact it is rife with significant delays. Hearings have to be scheduled. Bear in mind that the way the system works, most of the members of the arbitration board are part-time contract arbitrators and have other business interests. Hearings must be arranged at a time convenient to all. In addition, representatives of the unions and the employers also have to be scheduled. They have one or two lawyers with other duties and conflicting schedules, and on and on and on.

Once the schedule for the arbitration board is finally set and agreed upon, the hearings can start. Now we run into procedural tinkering. These are fomalized, lengthy hearings. Documents have to be exchanged. They have to be analysed, rebutted, discussed. Don't forget, these are highly complex documents dealing with a variety of legal and financial positions. But the system soldiers on and finally a decision is reached, many, many months after the initial contract.

In fact our statistics show that over the last 10 years arbitrated agreements in the hospital sector were finalized, on average, nearly two years after the expiry of the previous agreement. This has led the OHA to come out very much in favour of Bill 136. I want to read to you parts of a letter they have sent to us that states clearly, I think, the need for Bill 136 to occur in the hospital sector.

"Once restructuring has occurred," the OHA writes, "hospitals will need to continue to adapt as changes in clinical practice, technological breakthroughs and advances in treatment affect the way health care services are delivered. If hospitals are to operate successfully in such an environment, greater flexibility will be required in dealing with labour relations issues. In our view, current legislation doesn't always allow for the flexibility and speedy resolution of issues now required. During periods of significant change, this can have severe implications for the delivery of vital health care services."

We need to make sure hospital restructuring occurs efficiently in order that Ontarians might continue to have access to those vital services.

Continuing in the OHA brief with regard to the Dispute Resolution Commission, the OHA says:

"Interestingly, the 'permanent panel' and 'criteria' components of Bill 136 were recommendations of the Report of the Hospital Inquiry Commission which looked at hospital sector labour relations issues in 1974. And the recommendation for a 'permanent panel' was made jointly by hospitals and unions — including CUPE — in the early 80s."

With regard to the Labour Relations Transition Commission, OHA says:

"Criticism of the proposed transition commission is simply unfounded. While the Ontario Labour Relations Board typically deals with union representation issues, it does not do so quickly." For example, "When one considers it took four years, from 1989 to 1993, for the OLRB to sort out a representation issue related to the transfer of obstetrics from Kitchener St Mary's to Kitchener-Waterloo, it is obvious that the transition commission is essential if restructuring is to occur."

I think most people would appreciate those comments by the OHA. Members on all sides of the Legislature have talked about the need, and Ms Lankin's quotes were read into the record today about the third party acknowledging the need for restructuring. In order for that to happen, the OHA and other people — school boards — in the past have said, "We need some help with solving labour relations problems quickly and smoothly."

I go back to four years for an OLRB decision — keep that in mind — and an average of two years to arbitrate hospital sector contracts. This means that in many cases neither the employer nor the employees and unions know what their contract agreement is until long after the contract has expired. It's sort of like taking a job and not knowing what you will be paid until long after the job is finished.

These arbitration board decisions were not consistent across the province, and in most cases it appears that ar-

bitrators were not taking into account the employers' and taxpayers' ability to pay. We heard yesterday a member from the Liberal Party agreeing that we shouldn't take into account an employer's ability to pay; we shouldn't take into account whether a municipality has the ability to pay. He and the Liberal Party believe that taxpayers have a bottomless pit from which to pull. We disagree with that.

In fact many of the arbitrators rely on being accepted by both the unions and the employers for future work as arbitrators in the determination of contracts or the resolving of complaints and grievances. They know that if they make awards that are unpopular with either side, it will severely impact on their acceptability for future work. So in many cases currently arbitrators tend to split the difference in making their awards. Since the bargaining parties know this, they have no incentive to be moderate in tabling their positions.

I am sure the members will agree with me that this is just not fair — not fair for the employees, not fair for the employers and most especially not fair to the taxpayers who rely on the important and necessary services that the hospital sector and the other essential services sectors deliver.

As well, unfortunately, this system has led to an overreliance on contract arbitration in the hospital sector. To a large extent it has become an integral part of regular bargaining rather than a process to be used as a last resort.

On the average, over the last 10 years, 40% of collective agreements in the hospital sector have been settled through arbitration. These agreements involved 46% of unionized hospital employees. In the right-to-strike sectors, in contrast, 95% of collective agreements are successfully settled through negotiation, without recourse to arbitration.

The process I have just described deals only with the nearly 1,700 separate collective agreements in the hospital sector. Add to this the 194 separate collective agreements in the police sector and 87 in the fire sector and you have a recipe for confusion, delay and unreasonable costs, not only for the parties involved but for the taxpayers who eventually foot the bill. Bill 136 is designed to improve this unwieldy system of settling contracts in the essential services sector where employees do not have the right to strike.

If passed by the House, Bill 136 will create a new, permanent Dispute Resolution Commission that will have the power to settle the terms of collective agreements in the fire, police and hospital sectors if agreement cannot be reached. The Dispute Resolution Commission will put far greater emphasis on negotiation and mediation as a way of encouraging the employer and union to resolve outstanding issues, unlike the present system which relies on those lengthy formal hearings that I have just described.

The commission will have a number of innovative powers, including the right to choose the most appropriate method for resolving disagreements. This could include final-offer selection or mediation-arbitration. If mediation-arbitration is chosen, the commissioner would act as a mediator, assisting the parties to negotiate as much of the collective agreement as possible, and then the commissioner would decide the remaining outstanding issues.

If the commission uses the final-offer selection, the employer and union submit their final offer to a commissioner who chooses between the two of them. The offer chosen then becomes the basis for the new collective agreement.

The commission will have discretion on how to use final-offer selection. For example, it may be used for the entire agreement, on an issue-by-issue basis or any other way the commissioner believes appropriate. This method strongly encourages the parties to be very realistic in the final offer they put on the table.

**1610**

The Dispute Resolution Commission will consist of a number of neutral, fairminded, capable commissioners headed by a chief commissioner. In appropriate circumstances, such as when specific expertise is required, on the request of the parties the chief commissioner may also appoint sidespersons, people who participate in the decision-making process as respective nominees of the unions and employers, as I've already mentioned.

I would like to point out that where an employer and a union agree, Bill 136 will permit them to have their dispute resolved through private arbitration. The Dispute Resolution Commission that would be created by Bill 136 addresses many of the problems with the current system. It provides a permanent panel which should help with the consistency of decisions and ensure the true independence of arbitrators.

The new system will place much more emphasis on negotiations between the parties and not on third-party decision-making. In fact, if the parties turn to the Dispute Resolution Commission before they have seriously bargained, the chief commissioner may order them back to the bargaining table. It is only if all avenues have been exhausted that the commissioner will make an order to resolve the dispute.

The commissioners will be required to take into consideration best practices and affordability to taxpayers and, most important, they will be required to reach a decision within 60 days of the matter being referred to the commission. Contrast this with the nearly two years it takes to reach an agreement in the hospital sector alone.

If the members take a close look at Bill 136, they will see that we have come up with a solution to contract arbitration in the non-strike sectors that effectively balances employer needs and taxpayer needs.

The Minister of Labour has indicated that our government is ready to listen to constructive and concrete suggestions that could improve Bill 136. We have extended invitations to organized labour and other stakeholder groups to meet with us and put forward their proposals. Our intention is to create legislation that will smooth the transition to improved, effective and affordable public services. It will also permanently improve the dispute resolution process in the sectors that rely on interest arbitration.

Our intention is to create legislation that treats everyone fairly and reasonably. I think we have come to that with Bill 136 and I urge all members to support the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gravelle:** Certainly I want to comment on the remarks made by my colleague from Niagara Falls. I appreciate that he is taking the party line and perhaps believes that this is going to be exactly as he says it's going to be. But what he's not telling us and not telling the members of the House, and I think he has an obligation to do so, is that the deck is stacked. The situation is set up so that no matter what happens, the situation will be based on the Dispute Resolution Commission, which is being set up and appointed by the government itself. They will decide indeed on a totally partial basis, not a true, independent, arbitrated basis.

That is one of the real flaws in what the member for Niagara Falls is talking about. It can't be a system that can be considered one that truly encourages the continuation of true collective bargaining. It can't be a system that can be considered fair to the employees and even, for that matter, the employers as long as the system is set up so that the deck is stacked. That's something that needs to be recognized by all those who are concerned.

I come back to remarks that I made previously as well. The fact is, this is all really ultimately about the downloading process forcing municipalities into a position where they need to find mechanisms essentially to manage their finances. The fact is that this government has put the people of this province into a situation where, if they indeed decided at this stage to no longer carry on with their tax cut, a lot of these measures would not be necessary. It simply wouldn't be necessary.

There are many things that are happening right now in this province that are hurting people enormously, and we say to the government, if you really have any legitimacy and you want to be taken seriously, then stop the tax cut. It's not doing you any good. It's taking $5 billion a year out of the system and, as a result, forcing this kind of legislation on, which is truly undemocratic. We think it's a bad bill that simply should be withdrawn.

**Mr Christopherson:** A couple of comments with regard to the parliamentary assistant's remarks. First of all, what he fails to mention when he talks about the fact that the system isn't perfect, and there are very few systems that are, and I don't think there's a worker or their representative who would defend the system to the end of the world and say it's perfect, but you're using the argument that just because it's not perfect, that justifies your doing arguably the worst thing possible, and it's not going to wash.

What you've removed in this process of arbitration is the fact that there's no more fairness, a word that you continually use but you don't respect. It used to be, as it is now, that arbitrators were agreed upon by both parties, and only if they couldn't agree did the government step in. That's the point of fairness and of the independence of an arbitrator, the fact that they can choose who it will be and they can agree to put their trust in that individual. This is not going that way. The person making the decision now will be one of Mike Harris's golfing buddies, and there's nobody in this province who wants their working conditions dictated by a golfing buddy of Mike Harris. I can guarantee you that.

The other think I want to point out is you keep saying, "the taxpayers." I want to come back to that point. In my community of Hamilton, when you talk of "the taxpayers," you're talking in terms of Bill 136, people who remove snow and do garbage collection and keep our recreation centres going. What they make affects what the person who's working in the sewage treatment plant makes, and what they're making affects what the people inside grocery stores and inside department stores can make, and what they make collectively has an impact on how much the people at Stelco can bargain, in addition to other things, but it sets the community standard. And what people at Stelco get has an effect on what people at Dofasco without a union get, because they always get the same amount as the Steelworkers, because they try to keep the union out. That affects nurses, that affects teachers, and what you're trying to do is slow down that whole process. God help those who are the working poor, making minimum wage at the end of your food chain.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I'd first like to compliment the member for Niagara Falls, also the parliamentary assistant for labour, for just an excellent presentation, a very understandable presentation and some excellent information in that speech.

Certainly this bill, Bill 136, is all about fairness and it's about providing for the public sector, both employees and employers, the tools that are necessary to manipulate and work through these changes that are occurring that are so necessary. We're talking about some 3,300 collective agreements within municipalities, health care facilities. As they merge and amalgamate, it will assist in ensuring that fair treatment does occur with the various members of those sectors. It overcomes the uncertainty and it overcomes some of the inherent problems that might be in that restructuring.

The opposition should be reminded, back in 1993 of the Social Contract Act that they developed, in part X, "Miscellaneous," under 48(1), "Salary arbitration": "No" — I underline "No" — "increase in compensation shall be given as a result of any arbitration award or decision made on or after June 14, 1993." It absolutely overrides every collective agreement that was ever drawn up, well over 3,000 collective agreements.

What we're doing with Bill 136 is clear, is transparent, is an upfront agenda. There's no elimination of things like successor rights. There's no unilateral removal of bargaining rights.

Certainly it was interesting to hear the member for Port Arthur make some reference to tax cuts. I'll wind up with that one. He should recognize the tremendous increase in revenue coming into the province just because of those tax cuts stimulating the economy.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I'm always intrigued. I wonder who writes all these speeches that the members on the other side have to deliver. The great disadvantage of opposition, I should tell my friend from Niagara Falls, is all you get are a few little notes here and there, while the government members have a full speech all prepared by whatever ministry it happens to be. That's an unfair balance in this House that must be rectified. It must be rectified some way.

Of course, what everybody won't consider is that these laws are being passed now under the new regime, that is, under the new rule changes imposed by Mike Harris on members of the Legislative Assembly at the very time, Mr Speaker, and you know this very well, when many members of the government who are not in the cabinet and who are not seeking to be in the cabinet are expressing a concern that the government is moving too quickly, too recklessly and not looking at the consequences of its actions.

The government has imposed new procedural rules on this Legislature which allow the government to move even more rapidly, to bulldoze its legislation through at the fastest rate in the history of Ontario. That's contrary to what I'm hearing from some of my good friends in the Conservative Party, as I say, those who don't particularly aspire to the cabinet or don't want to please the Premier and are not afraid to speak out and let the people of Ontario know what they're hearing at the doors.

I look at this piece of legislation and I see the government again moving rapidly and recklessly and alienating even some of the natural supporters of the government, who I know are good Conservatives and have been supporters in the past of the Conservative Party.

**1620**

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Niagara Falls has two minutes.

**Mr Maves:** I want to thank the members for Port Arthur, Hamilton Centre, Northumberland and St Catharines for their responses. I know the member for St Catharines and his party are still opposed to workfare even though it continues to show good results all across Ontario, especially in the Niagara region. I can't understand that.

The member for Hamilton Centre said that the existing system is not perfect. Not perfect? Two years on average to settle at arbitration is far from just not perfect; that's really in trouble. Four years for the OLRB to make a decision on bargaining units? That's far from just not perfect; that's in big trouble. Something needs to occur while this period of transition goes forward.

The member from Hamilton also said the government steps in now if the employer and the employee can't agree on an arbitrator, and he's right. This is the same system that's being set up now, only it's going to be an expedited system. They are still encouraged to bargain, and if they can't come to an agreement, either one of the parties can refer it and say to the government Dispute Resolution Commission, "We need an arbitrator to come forward and help solve this dispute," just like it is now. The Solicitor General appoints the third person or the Minister of Health puts forward the third arbitrator. That's how it is now. He said it and he's right. It's going to be no different, only it's going to be expedited and a lot smoother.

I want to close on the note of saying that we will listen to anyone who has an alternative. To date, only the police associations have come forward and talked to us and accepted the government's invitation to have a dialogue. The OFL and CUPE have been invited to discuss the bill and have turned us down so far, but I'm hopeful they will come forward and I hope they will bring their alternatives forward. We do indeed want a smooth transition to move to fewer school boards, to fewer municipal bureaucracies and a streamlined, more efficient, patient-focused, service-oriented hospital sector.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'm pleased to stand in my place today and speak to Bill 136, which is the Public Sector Transition Stability Act, if that's what you want to call it. Really, it should be subtitled, "Just another in a series of bully bills of the Harris government." You could sub-subtitle it, "Another bill that hits upon workers in this province." That's exactly what it is.

It's really interesting. The whole series of bills that this government has brought forward in its first two years is really a series of bills stripping powers away from people, powers that people have fought very hard for over the last 60 years in this province. Systematically, bill after bill, this government is stripping those powers right from workers in this province.

**Mr Bradley:** From the corporate captains?

**Mr Ramsay:** Not from the corporate captains, as the rhetorical question from my colleague the member for St Catharines asks, facetiously, I know. No, it's ordinary working women and men across this province who are suffering the blows of bill after bill from this particular government.

What's interesting is that the Harris government always couches the rationale for these bills in the terms, "The other partners out there require this legislation to enact the restructuring that has to go on." I've talked to my constituents, and in dialogue with them we all understand that restructuring is necessary. I don't think anybody in this House is against restructuring. We all understand that has to happen.

Why we need bills such as this onerous anti-labour legislation now, why the Harris government believes it does, is that this restructuring is going down such a reckless and fast path towards destruction that this is the type of tool that has to be there, that the so-called partners are going to have to use. That's the rationale of the Harris government, but last night I was down at the Royal York Hotel at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario convention — for those who don't know, annually all the mayors and the reeves —

**Mr Bradley:** Good people all.

**Mr Ramsay:** Good people all, as my colleague from St Catharines says, and I agree. They meet annually to discuss pressing issues at the local level of government. I think we'd all agree that the local level of government is the level of government that is closest to the people. Boy,

was there a different mood in the room last night from previous years. This group of people — as stated in this House earlier today, they're primarily of a small-c and in many cases a large-c conservative bent — is furious at the Harris Conservatives, absolutely furious about the downloading changes they're bringing forward.

Ironically, what's interesting about this bill we're talking about today, the so-called Public Sector Transition Stability Act, is that the vast majority of delegates, the mayors and reeves and councillors from right across this province, voted down yesterday the necessity of having this bill as a tool. They said, "We don't need it." They said, "We would rather deal with our workforce and our unions in the way we always do: We sit down and" — let me throw this radical idea out here: They negotiate. That's what they usually do.

How many times have you heard in Ontario that we've had some massive municipal strike? It's a rare occurrence. It really doesn't happen. Our municipal people are able, 98% of the time, to come to agreement with their unions. They're the grass-roots people who are making these decisions on all our behalf, and they're very close to the workers who work on our behalf in all our municipalities.

They said yesterday that they don't need this, so I'm wondering why we're wasting our time on this. If your partners the municipalities, who by and large have been very supportive of this government up till now, say this bill is no longer required, why are you proceeding with this? Let's get on to something more important. Let's spend some of our time on being smart on some of this restructuring, rather than going holus-bolus down this reckless path you've embarked upon, ruining the local government fabric we've had in this province and have developed over the last 130 years. It's very reckless, and your partners the municipalities have said to you that it's time to slow down.

We are, if you can't tell already, opposed to this legislation. It's wrong and it's not needed, and it's not the way to go, to force the working men and women in all the various groups, whether they be unionized or non-unionized, who work in our school boards — excluding teachers, because this bill does not include the teachers — municipalities and hospitals into these amalgamations. In fact, many of the spokespeople from the various unions have said they have been through some of these situations before — never to this extent and on such a large scale in this province, but there have been amalgamations.

Another radical idea: The ones in the past were voluntary. Most of them were voluntary amalgamations between municipalities and, in some cases, some school boards wanting to realign their boundaries. These happened on a voluntary basis. Never, in those cases, have the workers in those various boards and municipalities failed to come to some agreement. The presidents of some of the major unions that represent these workers have said, "We have formulas that can accomplish this and we have the experience that can accomplish this." Now your municipal partners on the negotiating side of so-called government say they believe they can accomplish this also. So why we're going down this path I don't know.

What this bill is going to do in every community right across Ontario is hurt our nurses, eventually our teachers, because that's going to spill over to them in another piece of legislation forthcoming, our firefighters and our police officers. Boy, talk about some groups that have already been whacked by the Harris government. Firefighters — here we go again; we're going to give it to them again — and now we're including the police officers in this particular piece of legislation.

**1630**

Just as the Conservative Harris government didn't listen to Ontarians who were opposed to all of these amalgamations such as Bill 103, the megacity bill, and also Bill 104, which came very quickly upon the heels of that, the reduction in school boards bill — I'd like to talk a little bit about that later and how that's having tremendous impact especially on some of the big rural and northern regions of this province — just like it didn't listen to all the folks who were upset about those two pieces of legislation, guess what? They didn't consult with the so-called municipal partners either, who yesterday said, "We don't need it and you should rescind this bill."

Instead of doing that, they're trying to bring workers and employers together, to deal with these massive changes, with a gun to their head. That's not the way you bring a successful outcome in labour relations or any other type of discussion. This is wrong. It is wrong again to be giving some sweeping powers to one side versus another side.

It's interesting to note, and I think people should really understand, that we have a very successful province here. We have an extremely successful country and Ontario is one of the lead provinces in this country. It's most successful. How have we done that? We've done that through a balancing of powers between the various interest groups in this province. Any time you start to tilt that balance to one side or the other, as has the Harris government, you bring problems and trouble to this province. You'll see that come through in every day of our lives in this province. In every sector of the economy, in every walk of life that trouble's going to start to brew. That's the big mistake this Conservative government has made.

I wish the government members who are here today would just reflect upon the history of past Conservative governments that really tried honestly to bring some balance to the day-to-day proceedings of this province. I would say that the history books will treat pretty kindly the Robarts and Davis governments in how they tried, not always successfully, to bring balance to the day-to-day proceedings of this province. But for some reason this government that's got the same political party name as those previous governments is taking a very radical bent in a very different direction, a new and quite frankly untried direction.

It's frightening people. You can tell by the polling results, which, sure, mid-term really don't mean anything other than the people of Ontario are very concerned about

your direction and the reckless speed with which you're embracing that direction. That is going to be a major problem for you.

Groups like AMO, the municipalities of Ontario, which are a substantial number of Ontarians in their own right and of course represent each and every one of us, are speaking to you. I think it's time you listen. I think it's really time you just maybe sit back, take a breath and start to listen to what people are saying.

We had some examples here today in question period. Gerard Kennedy, our health critic, brought in some examples in some of these hospitals in Toronto that are going to be closed as soon as November 6 of this year, just a little more than two months away, of a woman who had to give birth to her child right behind a nursing station in one of the hallways of one of the hospitals in Toronto. This is the type of thing that is only starting to happen and this is the type of occurrence that will begin to increase as time goes on and we start to make those closures.

What the municipal leaders, the leaders in health care, our leaders in education, in all the areas that, granted, we really do need some restructuring in, no doubt about that, would like to say is, "We'd like to work with you in doing that, and let's don't do it so quickly." I don't know what all the rush is, but you're embarking upon this very reckless path and it's endangering the way of life we've come to know in Ontario.

In this particular bill you are affecting literally thousands of people: municipal workers in Ontario, 49,000 will be affected by this bill; library workers, 4,700 people; 13,000 transit workers; all 23,000 municipal police officers and workers and staff will be affected by this bill; our almost 9,000 firefighters are again going to be affected by this bill; all the workers at school boards, all the non-teaching workers in those boards, 48,000 of them in all boards; the part-time teachers, 30,000 of them will be affected by this; nurses, 46,000.

I didn't even know there were that many left in Ontario with the 15,000 nurses this government has fired over the last two years. Try to get some help in hospitals nowadays. Families have to either go out and hire some private nursing or rotate in shifts through the family to provide 24-hour nursing — in a hospital, of all places. This isn't at-home nursing which we would hope to have, which would be more cost-effective than hospital nursing, but even in a hospital many families are forced to either dig down deep in their pockets to provide that or share those duties among family members. It's a shame that in this wonderful province of ours in the year 1997, three years away from the next century, we're seeing our health care deteriorate like this.

Non-nursing hospital staff: 73,000 of those people are going to be affected by this bill.

Quite frankly, I'd say to the government, this is really bad politics. This is stupid politically, and I don't know why you're doing it, especially when the main partners, the municipal ones, are saying, "We don't need it."

But what is this causing? This all relates to the whole downsizing that is happening in our province. When I speak to some of our municipal officials in the Timiskaming area that I represent, one reeve, Ray Beland, the reeve from Hudson township, said to me — and I thought this was very perceptive — "You know what this government's doing? They're constructing a building without a blueprint." I thought that was extremely perceptive, because I think we all agree we have to reconstruct the building, not demolish it, tear it down and try to rebuild it. But at least we could make some additions and we could do some reconstruction on it. I think he was very perceptive when he said that.

You know why that perception is out there from all the municipal officials? Because they can't even get the answers. Up to this day now — we're on the eve of September, three months away from when all of this is going to take place on January 1, 1998. We're on the eve of that and yesterday the Minister of Municipal Affairs was down there at the Royal York at his noon luncheon speech and he couldn't answer the most basic question as to exactly what the downloading figures were going to be in certain areas such as for non-profit housing, for ambulance service, for all the social services that are still yet to come, what's going to be the total offset with education, what you are going to be paying for your share for education to the new mega-boards.

**Mr Bradley:** Do you think they knew the answer but didn't want to give it?

**Mr Ramsay:** One of my colleagues, the member for St Catharines, asks, "Do you think they knew the answer and they don't want to give it?" I'm not sure that's even correct. I think they're working so quickly on this, they don't even have all the answers. There may be a few they have and they don't want to lay out on the table yet with all of those angry mayors and reeves there, because I think any of the ones they do have are just going to anger them some more.

**Mr Bradley:** Neal Schoen is here, in fact, from Port Colborne.

**Mr Ramsay:** I see that. The mayor of Port Colborne is here. He probably had enough from the bearpit session down at the Royal York that's actually probably just finished now, I would guess, that he wanted to come up here and see what was really going on.

The mayors and the reeves are not getting the answers that they deserve. I'll give you an example of a reeve in my area of Timiskaming, the reeve of Harris township, Marty Auger. He said that if he was re-elected a reeve next year for his township he could not — he said it actually stronger than that, that he won't approve paying the $96,000 police bill that his township is going to be assessed. That's pretty serious stuff when a duly elected municipal official says he's not going to recommend paying that bill to the Ontario government.

But I can see why he's angered, because what this government has failed to realize is that you've created an unequal offloading to the various classes of municipalities in Ontario. If you take an example of this particular township that is very similar to many townships right across the province that are situated in rural parts of Ontario, they're

made up of small hamlets. Some people live in subdivision areas and commute into town, but primarily they have an agricultural tax base with a lot of farm land. These particular townships are going to be hit with an extra double-whammy that all the other municipalities aren't having to suffer the burden of; that is, this policing cost, which will be new to them, and of course the forgoing of the ability to tax farm land because of the substitution of the farm tax rebate for an exemption of 75% of the value of farm land being exempted from property tax. Now a rural municipality that's primarily made up of farm land can only tax farm land up to 25% of its assessed value. Where's the municipality going to get the rest of that money? From all the other homeowners.

**1640**

What usually happens in farm country — I see one of my rural colleagues from across the way paying attention to this — is that when a farm husband and wife retire, sometimes they just stay in the house on the farm or sometimes they move into the hamlet or the village in that township. It's going to be that retired couple, or possibly the widow, in those small villages who are really going to get whacked with the property tax on their home to try to make up for the lack of taxation that the township is unable to assess on all that farm land. All the homeowners, whether they be the farmers or the people who commute into town or the retired farm families, are going to be hit with an extremely heavy hand.

You're going to start to dislocate some of rural Ontario. For some of those people who could only afford a small home in a township that didn't offer that many services and therefore didn't assess that much tax, you're going to dislocate those people. You're going to chase those people away and maybe chase those people into poverty, because that widow or that retired farm family may no longer be able to retain their home. That would be a shame.

Why is this happening? It's because you haven't taken the time to think about this, to think it through in all the ramifications. But if you'd talked to Marty Auger in Harris township or the reeve of my township where I live, Roland Lachapelle, they would have told you that. I was the clerk of that township for 10 years. We are very close to the people, when you work on the municipal level. Both the administration, which is usually about two or three people in those townships, and the council live and breathe and eat right at that level. We're really in touch with what's going on there.

Those are the people you should have consulted with. Those are the folks you should've talked with, who would have worked with you truly as partners, no doubt about it. We'd all like to do better.

But now you're saying to them: "Here's all the offloading. And by the way, for your part, municipality, we'd like you to achieve some 3% in efficiencies each year for the next 10 years."

I don't know any municipal government, especially the small ones, that have been rolling around in the waste for the last 10 years — I don't know a municipal government that hasn't cut through the fat well into the muscle now, and probably into the bone. I think most municipal governments are into the bone already. I don't know; you're forcing them to cut right through the bone, and then you're going to have a breakage. I think that's going to break municipal government and start to have a profound impact on this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I always enjoy the remarks of my distinguished colleague from Timiskaming. He too has had years of municipal experience. What he's cautioning the House and asking the government to do is to put the brakes on, nothing short of that. In fact, his sentiments, his words are echoed by the vote that took place yesterday right down the street at the Royal York Hotel, where the municipal leaders are congregating. It said, by a margin of 198 to 108, "Slow down the passage of your Bill 136," another bully bill which is supposedly a facilitator, easing the transition. We know very well that what it does is punish people.

**Mr Bradley:** Will it make the trains run on time?

**Mr Pouliot:** "Will it make the trains run on time?" asks the member for St Catharines. This is not the kind of legislation that you can get up in the House one day and, with a click of the heels, this is pushed forward and you run and rule by decree. Those days are gone. You must give the municipalities a chance to grow. You can't shove things down their throats.

They'll be responsible for public housing. Let me tell you about social housing. The federal government sends the province $476 million in transfer payments. That's earmarked for social housing. Now the province is getting out of social housing; they're passing the buck to municipalities. They're putting in jeopardy that transfer payment of $476 million. Almost every municipality is saying, "This downloading will cost us money."

When the minister attempted yesterday to say it was a wash, revenue-neutral, no one believed him. They're slow in putting the figures forward. In fact, the press said — someone said he was misleading; the press said the minister was lying. Those are very strong words.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? The member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr Maves:** Mr Speaker, I'm getting discouraged, because you have to keep looking down since you sit only two seats away from me. But that's okay.

I must thank the member opposite for his words on municipal transfer of services. He didn't talk much about Bill 136; he just talked mostly about transfer of services.

It's funny that the member opposite mentions the motion voted on by AMO. The original motion, I understand, was to withdraw Bill 136, but they didn't want to vote on that because I think they see a lot of merit in Bill 136. They see the fact that when municipalities start to have mergers, they may need to refer. If they can't get agreement after they've exhausted all the current avenues, which they still have to follow under the Labour Relations Act in good faith, then they may just need somewhere down the line, in order to have smooth transition, a little

assistance from either of these commissions, the Dispute Resolution Commission or the Labour Relations Transition Commission.

They voted on something very different. They said, "Talk a little more." As you heard yesterday and as you have heard today, we have been more than willing to talk ever since we introduced this bill. Yesterday Mr O'Toole and myself read letters to Mr Wilson of the OFL from the minister, saying, "We are ready, willing and able to sit down and talk about this." No one has come forward yet. The police association has, and we've been in discussions with them about this. We're ready to listen to any alternative.

People must continue to realize that Bill 136 says, "You have to bargain first, you have to go through the existing process right now, before you can even think of coming to the Dispute Resolution Commission." I'm sure the municipal councillors are going to bargain as hard as they can and try to get a negotiated settlement before they even dream about going to a DRC.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm pleased to be addressing the House in the presence of Neal Schoen, who is the mayor of the town of Port Colborne. I consider it the city of Port Colborne. He rises in the House to be suitably acknowledged. He's here at the AMO conference. All the AMO people are worrying about the downloading.

**Mr Maves:** Whose box is he sitting in?

**Mr Bradley:** He is sitting in the members' gallery. He is sitting in a position where he can see the opposition better than he can see the government, which of course is very wise on his part.

Members of the House will remember that Mayor Schoen has been one of the leaders trying to keep the Port Colborne hospital from closing. All around the province of Ontario, despite the promise of the Premier when he said, "Certainly I can guarantee you, Robert, that it is not my plan to close hospitals" — Port Colborne ended up being very vulnerable to closing or radical change. Mayor Schoen was one of the leaders of the group opposing that. I'm glad he's in the gallery today to hear the debate on this particular issue.

**Mr Maves:** It was the district health council report, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, they try to pawn it off on the district health council. The district health council of course is only acting on the orders of the government. As you know better than anybody, Mr Speaker, when you chop all that funding from hospitals, somebody comes up with some radical surgery; they want to cut their leg off at the knee instead of at the hip because they figure they'd be better off. Of course it would be better if they didn't have to perform any surgery. I want to compliment Mayor Schoen on his stand on the hospitals.

I will get back to Bill 136 later.

**1650**

**Mr Len Wood:** I just want to respond briefly to the member for Timiskaming on his address concerning Bill 136. Every point that he is making has been covered. A lot of them are covered in the news articles that are coming out. The Toronto Star is saying today about Bill 136, "Mike Harris has launched a pointless war on the people who provide valuable public services in Ontario."

All the press clippings are full of articles saying, "Laughter Greets Leach's Pledge," "Mayors Accuse Leach of Misleading Public," "Tories Accused of Municipal 'Tax Grab,'" and it goes on and on, that AMO, which is made up of municipal leaders, is speaking out harshly against the Conservative government for moving too fast and in a direction that doesn't have to be done.

I know the member for Timiskaming was talking about all kinds of amalgamations and mergers that took place over the last 30 years. In Kapuskasing and Timmins it happened, and there was no reason for a bill like Bill 136 at that time that eliminated collective bargaining and put in a bunch of people like Mike Harris's golf buddies as the arbitrators who are going to make the final ruling on whether people are going to be able to protect their seniority in the jobs they are in right now, whether they are going to be able to hold on to the wages that they are getting right now. All of these decisions are going to be made by Mike Harris and his golf buddies out on the golf course someplace throughout Ontario, and the collective bargaining process has been completely eliminated.

I know for a fact that for the group that is not covered under Bill 136, the teachers, similar legislation is going to be brought in during this emergency session of the Legislature this summer to deal with the other group that is not being touched by this bill.

**Mr Ramsay:** I am pleased to be able to have at least another two minutes to sum up. I certainly miss the good old days, which were last week I guess, when we had 30 minutes at least. It's a little bit shorter now.

I want to give you another quote from one of the municipal officials in my riding. This time it's the mayor of Charlton, and she says, "We're the blind horses and they're leading us around," with regard to the restructuring. There is also a clip here from the town of Englehart. The clerk there says, "The taxes could be hiked now by 130% in the town of Englehart," and that their OPP charges are actually going to be more than the social services bill for their town. So there is an extra $3.5 million that comes to our district for OPP. In the case of Englehart, it's $316,000 for 740 households, which is over $450 a household. These are all new taxes.

It's going to be very interesting to see the municipal elections this year when the councillors are campaigning about all the new Harris government local taxes that are going to be coming. I don't know how they're going to do it. I'm sure you don't want to hear that in all the government-held ridings many Conservative municipal leaders are going to have to be campaigning against the Harris government and the new Harris government local taxes, the new Harris government property taxes that are having to come.

Some mayor, I think the mayor of St Catharines, said on Newsworld the other day he's thinking of sending two bills out, sending out the regular bill for the services that traditionally the town has had to service and then an extra

bill, the Mike Harris tax bill that would go out, so that people would be crystal-clear as to where this new tax was coming from: Michael Harris.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I too appreciate the chance to get up today and speak on this piece of legislation that is in keeping with the pattern of this government over the last two-plus years as they move ever so aggressively to change everything that we who have toiled here over the years have worked so hard to put in place by way of —

**Mr Bradley:** Do you only have 20 minutes to do this?

**Mr Martin:** Only 20 minutes. We used to have 30 minutes only a week ago. That's part of the activity that's going on here, part of this government's attempt to speed up the pace at which change is happening without considering for a second the impact that this change will have on the lives of people, the impact that this change will have on the lives of communities and on the lives of the families who live in those communities. I challenge any of you over there who have any morsel of conscience left to sit back for a second and think about it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** The member from Burlington used to be a member with a conscience, used to be on the left side of the spectrum when it came to Conservatives. We sat at committee hearings for a number of years, and I used to be impressed with the compassion and the understanding he had for people in communities, but he lost all that. He too drank the Kool-Aid, and it's unfortunate, because he was one of their better members.

I'm going to start my few comments today, my 20 minutes, or 18½ minutes, by sharing with the House a quote that I read into Hansard about a year ago, which is still appropriate today and so I will do it again. It's by Ralph Lapp and it's used by one Ted Schmidt in an article he wrote in the Catholic New Times, speaking of the terrible crisis that we find ourselves in in this province today as we deal with the agenda of this government. It goes like this:

"We are aboard a train which is gathering speed, racing down a track...leading to unknown destinations. Nobody is in the engine cab and there may be demons at the switch. Most of the society is in the caboose looking backward."

I spent a number of weeks this summer in July on holidays with my family and I had plenty of time to think about the agenda of this government and why they're in such an all-fired hurry, particularly as Conservatives, to move away from the traditions of this place and this province and the way that we make change and very thoughtfully evolve into a jurisdiction that is thoughtful of more and more people and in keeping with the best of Progressive Conservative ideology and history as we look around the world. It bothers me, because the evidence that you are not thinking out fully what you are doing, the evidence that you are moving too quickly and therefore not considering the impact on the lives of communities and families and people, becomes more and more evident as time goes on.

I suggest to you, members of the government and Speaker, that as time unfolds, people are beginning to catch on, and the people in the caboose of this train that is going at breakneck speed down the road of history in this province are beginning to take a look out the window to see what's coming, to see if there's anything they can do to slow this thing down, to make sure it's on the right track and maybe to find out if there is somebody in the engine cab who understands or who is feeling or intelligent in any way and might take control of the reins of power and do something different.

Here's a letter that I received from a constituent of mine some time ago, and I continue to receive letters of this sort as time goes on. As I get time away from this place — you folks seem hell-bent on sitting here week after week, month after month, without much of a break, but when I get time to go home to the wonderful community of Sault Ste Marie —

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** We gave you 10 minutes less so you can leave early.

**Mr Martin:** As you should, member from Burlington, do from time to time — I hear from my constituents, and they tell me things, and they are very simple things, things like this government is moving too quickly.

They ask me: "Does this government know what it's doing and where it's going? Does this government understand the impact the decisions they are making are having on the lives of my friends, on the lives of the members of my family, on the lives of people who used to be my neighbours who have had to pull up roots and move someplace else in search of work, watch the investment that they made in that little piece of property, the investment they made in their ability to do their work, the investment they made in the education of their children turn to sand and be washed away by the floods of the changes of the Mike Harris government?" They write me letters such as the one I'm going to share with you now.

**1700**

I think it's important that from time to time in this place we hear directly from the people we represent, the people who pay the bill, the people who ultimately we affect by the changes we make, who will be affected both directly and indirectly when this Bill 136 — and there's no point in fooling ourselves here. The majority across the way are hell-bent on making sure this piece of legislation becomes the order of the day in short order, and that will probably be within the next week or two. It will affect, directly and indirectly, every single person who calls Ontario home, who lives in any one of the communities we represent here in this place: Kapuskasing, Manitouwadge, Sault Ste Marie, all those wonderfully progressive, hardworking, caring, compassionate communities that have, over the years, found a way to pool their money so that they can provide for each other the services they couldn't afford individually or singularly.

It's funny. In their intelligence and in their wanting to do the right thing, they have found a way to not only provide the service in a caring, efficient and effective fashion,

but they have found a way, while doing that, to employ some of their brothers and sisters, some of their neighbours, some of their children who have grown up and been educated in the school systems we've all put together and paid for over the years, which are now being attacked and demolished, so that they might have jobs, so that some of the good people who live in places like Chapleau and Wawa and Dryden and Atikokan might one day see their children come back home and get a job in that community. That won't be the case any more.

Even if they do come back home and get a job, it will be at minimum wage, with no benefits and no hope of a pension plan. A pension plan will be a thing of the past not too long into the future if this government is allowed to get away with what it is doing, with what this Bill 136 will allow them to do. Who collecting minimum wage, who without a decent benefit package, who without the hope of a pension one day will make a decision to invest in a home? Who will make a decision to get married and have a family? Who will choose to make a place like Hornepayne or White River their permanent residence?

**Mr Bradley:** Nobody.

**Mr Martin:** Nobody, the member for St Catharines says, and he's absolutely right. Where will they go? Toronto? Is that what we want, everybody moves to Toronto? We beat up on Sault Ste Marie, we beat up on Thunder Bay, we beat up on Sudbury, and as the hordes of people who flood in from places like Manitouwadge and Marathon and Nipigon and Schreiber and Atikokan and Dryden find there's nothing for them in Sudbury and Thunder Bay and Sault Ste Marie, they move to Toronto. What will be for them here? Well, I suggest to you, more of the same. What a future we prepare, what a future we work together collectively to put in place for our kids.

We hear the members across the way talk about past governments spending money to the detriment of or at the cost of the future of our children. So much hogwash, so much baloney. No thought whatsoever for the future of the kids of today who will be the adults of tomorrow who will look after the kids you pretend to be so concerned about.

Here's the letter I told you I was going to read. It's from Dorothy Thain in Sault Ste Marie and she writes:

"Dear Tony,

"I'm mad. Please tell Mike Harris for me and all people throughout Ontario to keep his tax cuts and start taxing his already rich friends more instead of sheltering them."

**Interjection:** Right on.

**Mr Martin:** Right on, absolutely.

"We, the middle-income and low-income people are the ones spending the money to keep the economy going instead of investing our money in foreign countries or taking wonderful vacations abroad, something most people only dream of."

She's talking about the people in our communities who drive the buses; the people in our communities who pick up the refuse on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings; the people in our communities who make sure that the schools our children go to are warm and clean in the morning; the people in our communities who make the food and serve it in the hospitals; the people in our communities who give their lives sometimes to make sure that our streets are safe; the very same people in our communities who come when called because our house is on fire.

These are the people you're attacking with this bill and with almost everything else you're doing in this Legislature. You've given them, by the things you've done, the impression that they are no longer valuable, that the services they provide are no longer essential. That is shameful, downright shameful.

The people Dorothy is talking about are the people who assist the teachers in the classroom to make sure that the child who is challenged and struggling and needs a little extra help gets it. They're the people you see on the sidewalk of your community picking up the litter so that visitors who come can say, "What a beautiful town this is. Maybe next year I'll come back again for another vacation, and when I go home I will tell my friends and neighbours that it is a beautiful community," and they will come back and visit so that the economy of that particular community can continue to go on.

Indirectly, Dorothy is talking about those people who work in shops and sell you that item that you want to buy or who work in a small factory in the industrial park of Sault Ste Marie or Blind River or Elliot Lake, because they will be indirectly impacted and affected by Bill 136 in the context of everything else you're doing.

"We love our country and want to see it grow for the better of all people, not just the chosen few. Mike Harris doesn't care about anyone, especially people in the north, who have had to fight for everything we've ever got. To him, we are expendable and we don't count."

People are beginning to understand and to realize as they are affected indirectly by the decisions your government is making. The only reason the bottom isn't falling completely out of your popularity across this province is that there are still a few people out there, mostly in the 905 belt, who haven't been touched, directly or indirectly, by what you've done over the last two-and-some-odd years while you've been governing this province.

But I say to them, keep your eyes and ears open, because this too is coming to your town, this too is coming to your neighbourhood and to your family. Sooner or later, we will all be impacted, and it's a negative impact. People like Dorothy Thain know that, and we're very thankful that Dorothy has the courage to sit down with pen and paper to write her thoughts and feelings and send it to her member so I can read it in this place. She says: "The rich get richer and the poor will get poorer if he has his way. Please don't let him do this to these fine and proud people."

That was written by Dorothy Thain of St Andrews Terrace, Sault Ste Marie. What a wonderful letter. What a thoughtful letter. What a letter full of compassion and understanding and intelligent response to what she sees all around her.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** They're laughing.

**Mr Martin:** They're laughing? Well, it isn't important to them because it hasn't affected them yet. I find it disconcerting that more of them haven't, over the summer period, spent more time listening to the Dorothy Thains of their particular constituency. If they had, they would come back here and they wouldn't be laughing in this place as somebody like me puts a letter such as that on the record.

We all know and Dorothy knows and others around the province know that really what this is all about, what this agenda is all about, is this tax break, and we can't say it enough, this tax break that's going to deliver over a four-year period to people in this province who are making $15,000 a year a sum total of $615, and to people who are making $100,000 a year a sum total of $8,705, some 18 times as much money.

People in this province making $1 million a year — and there are quite a few of them and there are more with each day that goes by under this government and there will be more to come as this government has its way — will make $77,645, some 166 times the amount a person making $10,000 a year will make.

**1710**

I ask you, is that fair? Is that in keeping with the traditions of the province of Ontario? Is that in any way helpful to the development of an economy that is civil and positive in terms of people making a half decent living and in terms of longevity and taking us into the future? I suggest, no.

To achieve this tax break we see this government cutting jobs. That's what they've been doing up to now, and with the introduction of this Bill 136, because they've got all the money they possibly can get by way of the job cuts they've put in place, now they're going to take money out of the pay package of the people who still have jobs.

I share with you in Sault Ste Marie, so far we've lost, if you add up all the jobs that have disappeared in the public sector, some 969 to 1,100 jobs. If you put the multiplier effect in place, we're talking something close to 2,000 jobs gone out of Sault Ste Marie.

There was a study done in North Bay. In North Bay it's almost identical because North Bay, as many of you know, is very dependent on the activity of government for its economy and for its job base — municipal, provincial and federal. In North Bay there will be a sum total of over 1,000 jobs gone; you put the multiplier effect in and you're talking 1,500.

This piece of legislation, Bill 136, is about now taking those who have been fortunate enough to still have jobs and reducing their pay and taking away their benefits and taking away their pension plan. That's the only place now you've got left where there's any money to be got so that you can reach the targets you need to pay out on this tax break promise and still balance the budget. That's what it's all about.

I want to wind up today, if I have the time, and I think I do, with a quote again from Catholic New Times, which last year for Labour Day wrote this:

"Now we all know the statistics and studies about loss of jobs through technological change, cuts, attrition, downsizing and layoffs. We see what that really means, as people we know adjust to contract work, to starting over with each new job to earn some holidays, to waiting for word of an extension. We see the downtimes between jobs or contracts, how people put off having families, how they worry for their children's futures. We see capable, knowledgeable people scared that their age means they will never work again. We see older people afraid to stop working. We see seasonally unemployed benefits curtailed, with less and less money available and whole communities in peril.

"And we wonder what we can do."

The only group of people holding the cards in this game right now are you folks across the way. Please, do the right thing.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Marland:** It's quite something to listen to the member for Sault Ste Marie when he talks about his brothers and sisters. This is the same member who stood in this House and voted to override the collective bargaining process in this province with the social contract.

He talks about jobs in the public sector. I wish somebody could explain to me where it is written that the public sector has to be an employment agency. That's what the taxpayers of this province are fed up with. They're fed up with the fact that government is supposed to employ everybody. When government creates those jobs within its own employment ranks, there's only one person who pays for it. It's the taxpayer.

What this government is about is creating jobs in the private sector. I know that's hard for the New Democratic members to understand, but that's a basic formula for success and it's that formula this government is pursuing.

I must just say, as politely as I can, that to listen to the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie, to use a quote I have used before so that I don't get into trouble with the Speaker, any relationship with the truth is merely coincidental in some of those comments. It's most unfortunate to use the opportunity you have to tell people things that simply are not a result of this legislation to which you are supposed to be speaking this afternoon.

This issue about Mike Harris doesn't care about anyone I guess I'll have to wait till my next two-minute questions and comments to deal with that, because no Premier in this province has cared for people as much as —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further questions or comments.

**Mr Gravelle:** I want to congratulate the member for Sault Ste Marie on a fine speech and I think a speech that spoke about some issues that perhaps haven't been addressed enough, which is the loss of hope that's happening in this province among our young people and among people who really have come to believe that this is a province where we could grow and prosper. That hope is being taken away.

I must also comment, and I'm sure the member for Sault Ste Marie will do so, that I find quite shocking the member for Mississauga South's clear disdain for the members of the public sector. It's quite shocking to have

her speak in that regard, let alone to speak I think quite rudely to the member for Sault Ste Marie, when he clearly does care.

I can certainly tell you, Madam Speaker, and all members of the House, I've been talking to a number of young people myself in the last two years. I think one of the most striking things about what this government is doing on a continual basis, and Bill 136 is just another rather frightening extension of that, is that they're taking away the hope and the belief.

The member for Sault Ste Marie spoke very much about the smaller communities in Ontario, certainly many of which I know we all care about. I think of some of the communities that I represent and that as a member from northwestern Ontario I care a great deal about, communities that are truly frightened by this downloading process, truly frightened about the fact that their tax base is disappearing and this government doesn't seem to really care.

It really does seem to come to down to this philosophy of "May the fittest survive," and that's it. If you aren't one of the fittest and you don't survive, too bad.

It's important that we, as legislators, continue to fight for people and for people's hope, so they can continue to believe there is a future for them. I think the sad thing about Bill 136 and so much other legislation is that is indeed disappearing.

**Mr Wildman:** I would like to comment and congratulate my friend from Sault Ste Marie for his presentation on Bill 136, and to say how glad I was he read into the record the courageous letter from Ms Dorothy Thain, one of his constituents, who talked about the importance of the public sector and the rights of public sector employees.

In passing, I would say for the benefit of some of the members opposite, many of the public sector employees who were very angry at the social contract, if given the terrible choice between the social contract and Bill 136, which takes away their right to protect themselves and to negotiate, would have taken the social contract any day. This takes away their right to strike and it means they will lose their pay and their benefits and maybe their jobs.

I would just point out for those members opposite who don't seem to understand this, public sector employees pay taxes. Unemployed people do not pay taxes. So if what you're intending to do, beyond laying off the public sector employees who work directly for this government, is to enable municipalities to lay off their staffs, we're going to have more unemployment, we're going to have more people who are going to have to get incomes from unemployment insurance, and then subsequently probably from social assistance, and they will be a drain on the public purse rather than contributing to the public purse and to the society.

I suppose that makes sense, because this government's philosophy is that the poor have too much money and the wealthy don't have enough. That's the reason for the tax cut: The poor have too much and the wealthy don't have enough, so we have to give more to the wealthy through a tax cut and we take it away from those at the low-income level to help pay for it. What a stupid contradiction of common sense that is: The poor have too much and the wealthy not enough.

**1720**

**Mr Maves:** I just want to thank the member for Nepean for bringing in the rule changes so we only had to listen for 20 minutes to something that had absolutely nothing to do with the bill in question.

I feel sorry for the people of Sault Ste Marie when they have a member stand up here and talk so negatively about his community. Who would want to invest when there is a member from that community speaking so negatively about it?

**Mr Wildman:** What a phoney argument. That's insulting.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Algoma, come to order.

**Mr Maves:** Contrast that with the member for Nepean, whose positive attitude has brought about thousands of jobs in the Ottawa area: 4,100 Newbridge jobs in the next five years; 5,000 in Nortel —

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** That has nothing to do with this government, believe me.

**Mr Maves:** It has got a lot to do with this government. The member opposite talks about the traditions of this province. One of the things that was not a tradition of this province ever until 1990-95 was an $11-billion deficit. There was a great accident of Ontario politics that this third party got elected and we're going to be paying through the nose for the rest of our lives for the mess they made in this province. That was not a tradition of this province — an $11-billion deficit. It's shameful. We'll be paying for it for years.

Jobs losses: You should have thought about the job losses when you were in office. We lost 10,000 net jobs when you guys were in office. This economy right now is producing a thousand jobs a day —

**Mr Len Wood:** Forty-two years of Tories. That's deficit after deficit.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Cochrane North, come to order.

**Mr Maves:** — and they're good jobs. The ones I mentioned in Ottawa are good, high-paying jobs with lots of benefits. High-tech jobs, jobs of the future. They're going to take Ontario and Canada to the top of the world.

**Mr Martin:** I want to first thank the members for Mississauga South, Port Arthur, Algoma and Niagara Falls for taking the time and making the effort to respond to the thoughts I put on the record just before.

There are just a couple of things I want to mention in summing up. One is the inability of this government to put things in context, to connect bills to the real-life situations of people and families and communities in this province, to understand that everything you do here has an impact on the lives of people, particularly on people who are vulnerable and who are in need of some communal support out there. You've got them in your crosshairs and you're going to make sure that with everything you do you're bang on target, and you are so far.

The other thing I want to very briefly talk about, because it's been brought up so often, is this whole question of our track record and the social contract. That was very difficult for all of us when we were government to do.

We were faced with the same reality as you are today as a government: dwindling resources, a deficit that was growing that we knew we had to do something about and be responsible around. We grappled with it and we sat and we talked with people and we negotiated. Yes, we made some mistakes; we made some big mistakes. In hindsight, in the rush of trying to be a good government and do the right thing and be concerned about people's lives and the impact it will have on them, some of what we did by way of the social contact was not in keeping with the best traditions, particularly of the party that I belong to —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Member for Mississauga South, come to order.

**Mr Martin:** I'll tell you, as the member for Algoma said, the social contract was a hell of a lot better for people than anything that your government —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further debate.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I rise today hopefully above the rhetoric to deal with the facts of what Bill 136 is about.

Bill 136 is entitled the Public Sector Transition Stability Act, 1997, and in effect it's made up of two pieces of legislation. It's made up of the Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act, 1997, and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997.

As you know, the municipalities, the education sector and the hospital sector wanted this piece of legislation to deal with the transition they faced with their own sectors.

**Mr Martin:** That's why they voted against it yesterday.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Tascona:** What they're dealing with is about 450,000 workers in these sectors.

There are two points I'd like to address through Bill 136. First of all, I think it introduces reality to public sector labour relations by requiring the public interest and not the union interest to be considered in resolving collective bargaining disputes.

I want to go right to the act and deal with it. The Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act, 1997, includes hospital employees under the arbitration provisions of the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act; police and civilian employees under the Police Services Act; firefighters under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997; and Ontario Provincial Police under the Public Service Act.

The proposed act amends these various pieces of legislation by providing that collective bargaining disputes go to the Dispute Resolution Commission for final and binding determination on the request of either the employer or the union. The only exception is if both parties agree in writing to waive the Dispute Resolution Commission process and use a board of arbitration instead under the previous legislative scheme.

Also, what's important about this legislation in terms of bringing reality to the labour relations process is that there are statutory criteria to be considered. The bill requires that in making its determination the commission consider the criteria contained in Bill 26, including the requirement to consider the employer's ability to pay. The commission is also required to consider the purposes of the act in deciding the wages and working conditions of the collective agreements. These purposes, which are contained in section 1 of the proposed act, include the requirement to have regard to "best practices that ensure the delivery of quality and effective public services that are affordable for taxpayers." Isn't that a novel idea?

The criteria are specifically included in the sections of the bill which address each of the employee groups; for example, firefighters, police, hospital employees and others.

The second part of the bill which I think is important is that it will ensure that essential public services are provided and are not interrupted in the hospital, municipal and education sectors through unions engaging in turf warfare.

I'd like to refer to the second major piece of the legislation proposed in Bill 136, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997, which is aimed at the labour relation consequences of the restructuring presently taking place in the hospital, municipal and education sectors.

I'd like to point out that teachers, whose collective bargaining rights are now covered by the School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act, Bill 100, are not covered by the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act. That's an important point.

Also, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act establishes an entirely new regime, to be enforced by the new Labour Relations Transition Commission, for deciding all successorship matters, including bargaining unit composition and union representation, as well as new rules for deciding over a transitional period the continued applicability of collective agreements.

As my friends in the NDP know, and in the Liberal Party also, Bill 136 does not override existing collective agreements, some 3,300 of them out in the public sector. It also provides that successor rights are not overriden.

In essence, Bill 136 protects the public interest during the period of transition in the municipal, education and hospital sectors. The dispute resolution process not only provides a fair mechanism for employers and unions to settle their collective bargaining disputes, but like the private sector, imposes economic reality: the ability to pay. In essence, in the past it was, "We'll put a wage increase out for the public sector and increase the taxes." Well, property taxes are not something that can continually skyrocket. Also, Bill 136 adds the element of the unknown to negotiations that has resulted in more collective agreements being freely negotiated in the private sector, rather than in the public sector.

I say that Joe Taxpayer will not tolerate spiralling wage increases that directly result in increased property taxes. There must be accountability on the employers and the

unions. I'll use the analogy: The private sector must consider consumers' ability to pay for their product, which is logical, and the public sector must be held to account by considering what Joe Taxpayer can afford or is able to pay. That's a really novel idea, to make sure the taxpayer isn't gouged every time there's a wage increase.

**1730**

The status quo, which we're trying to change, is that you give a 2% wage increase and that automatically equates to a 2% tax increase. I say, for what? Do you get an increase in productivity? No. Do you get an increase in services? No. Do you get greater efficiency? No. Do you get better service? No. The current system provided by arbitrators is to give a wage increase just because Joe Taxpayer will pay. It protects their interests — I'm talking about the arbitrators, not the public interest — in getting the union to agree to them being hired in the next arbitration. The union interests plus the self-interest of arbitrators who are in the business to decide these disputes always overrides the public interest.

Bill 136 protects Joe Taxpayer from spiralling wage increases which will result in property tax increases, plus ensures that essential hospital, municipal, fire and police services are protected from union turf warfare.

Let's not forget who wanted this legislation: It was the municipal sector, the education sector and the hospital sectors. They wanted this bill to ensure the transition in the labour relations sector for the public service.

This government wants to work with unions and the public sector to get us from point A, which is a $100-billion debt plus an $11-billion deficit, to get us to point B, which is a balanced budget and the best hospital, municipal, fire and police services the taxpayer can afford.

As we all know, with respect to balanced budgets, the Liberals oppose our efforts to achieve a balanced budget. They're on record for that. But with the exception of the police unions, the other union leaders — Mr Wilson, Mr Ryan — won't meet, which is proof that when the union leaders have taken this position, they have no interest in Joe Taxpayer, they have no interest in the public interest and they have no interest in accountability with respect to their own actions.

I say to you, I support Bill 136 and I would urge the unions, with their leaders, to come and meet with the government to work with this bill, to make sure there are better public services, to make sure we have accountability in the services that are provided and to make sure we can balance the budget, which is all that taxpayers want.

We know the Liberals do not want the balanced-budget approach we're taking. I question whether they even want a balanced budget, based on the actions of their predecessors.

I support Bill 136 because it's good, sound labour relations sense and it ensures that we have a transition that will be effective.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments? The member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr Patten:** The member for Simcoe Centre talks about, "What a novel idea." I would say to him, what a novel idea to consult with people who would be the most affected. The Premier said many times that he would meet with the labour leaders: "Come on, sit down, we'll talk about it, just like I did with the doctors." He didn't have the guts to do it. He wouldn't meet with them.

You say, "We're prepared to meet with the labour leaders and to discuss some of these issues with them." That's absolute nonsense. When you talk about a balanced budget, and that we don't agree with your approach, you're darned right we don't agree with your approach. On one hand you cut and on the other hand you remove resources from the local level. This is one of them. You remove resources from the municipalities and then put the screws to them and provide the employers with tools to take advantage of contracts that are in place at the moment, to open them up. It's tilted totally in favour of the employers, and anybody who's in a position of being squeezed will see this as an attractive idea.

In spite of that, AMO passed a resolution yesterday. You're saying the municipalities are in favour of it. They're not in favour of it. They said, "You never consulted with us." Again, isn't that a novel idea, as you would suggest, to consult? There's no evidence of any real understanding of consultation. If you had, you'd consult with people. In the same way, you didn't consult with people on Bill 99 and the injured workers. The minister never met with injured workers and that bill is all about compensating people who are injured in the workplace.

Finally, he talks about a balanced budget. We don't agree with his particular approach because (1) I don't think he's going to achieve it, and (2) he's doing it at the expense of the weakest and most vulnerable in our society. The richest will be the biggest benefactors of all, according to these policies.

**Mr Christopherson:** The member for Simcoe Centre talks about the fact that successor rights are not stripped away in here. So what? The fact is, I don't see anything in here that prohibits any commissioner from being able to touch that part of a collective agreement, no matter what. Given the fact that you took them away from OPSEU in Bill 7 and you didn't talk about that in the campaign, it's nowhere in the Common Sense Revolution, you didn't tell anybody you were going to strip them of their rights to have the same benefits and wages and seniority when their jobs are privatized — you talked about Bill 40.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Bill 40; remove Bill 40, that is all.

**Mr Christopherson:** Yes, you did, as the Minister of Agriculture is heckling from across the way. You did do that. As much as I disagree with it, you did talk about what you were going to do there. You did not talk about taking successor rights away from OPSEU members, virtually firing them and causing them to be unemployed when you privatized their jobs. That's exactly what will happen.

Under this Bill 136, it may not strip them away explicitly, but I'd like to hear the member point out to me where that cannot under any condition happen as a result of Bill 136, and the matter being referred to the commissioners.

As far as I can see in reading this — and I stand to be corrected — those commissioners have absolute power. Those commissioners are appointed, handpicked by the cabinet, Mike Harris's buddies. The decisions they make can't even be appealed to the courts. This is absolute and total power, and we have no doubt your intent is to gut these collective agreements, because you're hoping to see those jobs privatized too. Privatized jobs, when you do it, means lower pay, no security and God forbid anybody should have a union in the province under Mike Harris.

**Mrs Marland:** When we talk about what's in or out of agendas and campaign promises, yes, we had the Common Sense Revolution. The New Democratic Party had An Agenda for People, and there was nothing in the Agenda for People about stripping union rights, as they did with the social contract.

**Mr Christopherson:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I will gladly debate my comments with the member for Mississauga South anywhere and any time she pleases, but as someone who's a stickler for the rules, she knows very well — I can't get the microphone on.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** No, I'd like to make a point of order.

**The Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre has a point of order. He's correct; you're supposed to be commenting on the speech of the member for Simcoe Centre, not the comments made by the member for Hamilton Centre.

**1740**

**Mrs Marland:** Mr Speaker, earlier today you stopped the clock when there was, in your opinion, an interruption from the other side of the House.

**The Speaker:** But I think his point of order was in fact in order.

**Mrs Marland:** Yes, but you stopped the clock earlier today not over a point of order. You used your own discretion to stop the clock when there was an interruption on this side of the House.

I don't mind sticking to the rules as long as they apply equally to everybody who responds in questions and comments, but that doesn't happen in this place. You know what does happen in this place? A whole lot of rhetoric that unfortunately confuses the public. But don't ever think that at the end of all of this the public won't understand what our government is about.

This is the transition stability act. It's a one-time act, and if you read it, it deals with one situation —

**The Speaker:** Order, member for Mississauga South.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Sault Ste Marie, that comment is out of order. I ask you to withdraw. You must withdraw it from your own seat as well.

**Mr Martin:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you for this opportunity that comes on the very same day that there is a wake for the closing of the London Free Press bureau here in Toronto, the Queen's Park bureau. As all members may know, with the downsizing and with the buyouts and so on at the London Free Press, more than 600 years of editorial and newsroom experience is being lost and yet another bureau is being closed.

When we look at this bill that we have before us, we find out it's going to receive not the same kind of coverage that you, Mr Speaker, and all members of the House will be concerned about. So we will be draping black over the Legislature because the Free Press bureau is being lost. The Speaker is wearing black to demonstrate that quite obviously today.

I found the member's remarks interesting, though predictable, unlike those of us on this side who are never predictable in what we're going to say. I found the defence of the government position extremely predictable, and I can't get over the fact that so many of the Conservatives are being critical of the NDP for imposing the social contract.

As I recall in this House, members of the Conservative Party voted for the social contract. You were supportive of it. When Bob Rae and the NDP brought in the social contract, I didn't hear anybody expressing concerns then about the abrogation of contracts. But now today, when there's another bill before the House, you keep mentioning the social contract, which I think is — I can't use the word. Some people would have said "hypocritical," but the Speaker makes you withdraw that word. I just wonder why you're doing it.

**The Speaker:** I am aware that the member for Sault Ste Marie also used disparaging language about the Minister of Agriculture at that time. I ask you to withdraw that comment as well.

**Mr Martin:** I did and I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Responses?

**Mr Tascona:** I'd just like to thank my colleagues for responding to my position with respect to Bill 136. I'd also like to respond to the member for Ottawa Centre that it's very interesting with respect to his approach to consensus and reaching agreement. He refers to the doctors. Certainly I would say that this government took a very responsible approach, a reasonable approach in terms of reaching a settlement in the public interest with the doctors. It's interesting that when the Liberal government was in power, the government of that day had a strike with the doctors. It's just unbelievable that they would be saying our approach is not reasonable. At this point in time, we're at second reading and basically we're going to be going through public hearings. We're listening and we're trying to meet with the union leaders, who have refused to meet.

The member for Ottawa Centre, buttressed by the member for St Catharines, has confirmed the Liberal approach. They're not interested in a balanced budget. They're interested in basically breaking down to whoever they can please and spending as much as they can. The Liberal Party is not interested in a balanced budget. We all know that.

With respect to the member for Hamilton Centre, I'm glad he admitted that successor rights were not affected by the legislation.

**Mr Christopherson:** I didn't say that.

**Mr Tascona:** There's no language in there taking away successor rights and he knows it. He also knows it would take express legislated language to take away the successor rights that are imbedded already in provincial legislation. So let's get to the facts and not fool around with what you're trying to prove here.

I would say in closing, with respect to the social contract, it was a fact that they overrode collective agreements. This legislation doesn't do anything of the sort. It basically keeps labour relations intact and protects the public interest.

**Mr Bradley:** I know there would be many issues to be canvassed on this if we weren't now relegated to only 20 minutes of debate on a bill which has such ramifications for the province.

What's going to happen now is that the government's going to be able to get its agenda through much more quickly at the very time when I hear Conservative members in the hallway, and read about them in the press, saying the government is moving too quickly, too recklessly in some cases, not looking at the ramifications of its actions. Here we have the Premier and his — are you allowed to say "henchmen" any more? — his advisers —

**Interjection:** Go ahead.

**Mrs Marland:** No, it's unparliamentary.

**Mr Bradley:** It's unparliamentary, my friend from Mississauga South tells me. I was back looking at the television set a while ago and there was a bit of a problem with it as Mrs Marland was on television with her ravishing new outfit and it was having an effect on the television camera. I'm told we're supposed to wear something plain, Margaret, in here.

I am again intrigued with how many Conservative members get up and berate the former government of Bob Rae, the NDP government, for implementing the social contract. The Liberal Party opposed that, but the Conservative Party today keeps talking about it, about the fact that the social contract was imposed on the public service. I don't know why you're doing that because you should be dealing with this piece of legislation. I intend to deal with this bill and not with a number of extraneous issues that I hear government members dealing with when they get up.

I was intrigued by the reaction at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario convention which is being held in Toronto. My observation in the past is that the Conservative Party and Conservative supporters have been well represented among that group of individuals which comes to Toronto. Knowing that many of them have been strong Conservative supporters in the past, I was flabbergasted that a resolution was passed by people who supposedly are going to benefit from this bill, people who are the employers in the public sector, a resolution which was not supportive of Bill 136. I would have anticipated that if the government had sold this to the municipalities as necessary and desirable, there would have been a good deal of support at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

The mayor of St Catharines, Mayor Alan Unwin, was concerned and expressed his concern at this meeting that the government is not moving forward with providing the necessary figures on the effects of downloading.

The member for Simcoe in his response indicated the other parties don't care about the budget, but here is a situation where we have a government which is forgoing almost $5 billion a year in revenue to give a tax break to the richest people in our society.

As all the members know, we have a circumstance where the government had an opportunity to meet those obligations to bring down the deficit. I kept hearing from all the people who were supporting the Conservatives, "The number one priority is bringing down the deficit," and yet here they are borrowing money to finance a tax cut, which benefits —

**Mr Patten:** At prime rates.

**1750**

**Mr Bradley:** At prime rates, as my colleague from Ottawa Centre mentions, and therefore having the accumulated debt of the province increased. I know a lot of Conservatives who are concerned about this, Conservative economists who say to me: "I'm a Conservative in my approach. I thought the deficit was important and I can't believe this government is giving this income tax cut which will largely benefit the richest people in our society." If people were in the category of being multimillionaires and if they didn't have a social conscience, they might well say, "Well, that's okay," but even wealthy people with a social conscience would say, "Why don't we maintain those services?"

What is this bill about? This bill is about downloading. That's why this bill is necessary, because this government is disrupting and downloading. There are some people who initially will say: "I like the sound of this bill. We're getting some other group. It's time we got that group." I mean no disrespect or any particular allusion when I say this, but just as 50-some years ago there were people who said, "I'm not worried when some other group is being affected," and then when they were being affected said, "I should have been worried," I look at today and say that people out there are beginning to see that everyone is becoming a victim of the zealots in the Premier's office, those who are the revolutionaries, the true believers, the YPCs who at the conventions are more radical in terms of their right-wing conservatism than the regular Conservatives I've seen in this House.

My friend Noble Villeneuve is here today. I can't speak for him, but he will recall some of the people I will mention. I can't believe that Bob Welch, the long-serving and distinguished member for Lincoln and then St Catharines-Brock, would be the kind of person who would want to see this imposed on Ontario. While he was a Conservative and Tom Wells was a Conservative and our late friend Larry Grossman was a Conservative and Dennis Timbrell, all these people were Conservatives, they were moderate Conservatives; not even red Tories in some cases but moderate Conservatives. They would not move so radically, so quickly, so recklessly. They didn't let the YPCs, the Young Progressive Conservatives, the zealots push them into these positions: the people who are now filling

the editorial boards of the Conrad Black papers across Ontario and this country, the people whose only experience is that they worked in either Mike Harris's office, the Conservative research office or the Reform Party office and then get jobs on the editorial boards of various places at the age of 20-something and have all the knowledge and wisdom that more senior members of this House are not reputed to have. I can't believe those people would be supporting Bill 136. It's an unnecessary piece of legislation. It's a confrontational piece of legislation.

People in the public sector are quite realistic as to what they're facing today. I'm talking about the rank and file out there. They're pretty certain that they're not going to be getting huge wage increases or major benefit increases at a time when governments are fighting deficits. They are not radicalized people; they are moderate people. When you talk to the rank and file out there, they are moderate people but they see this government as picking on them. You go after each group in our society. At the cabinet table, someone must come in with the jest, I say to my friend Mr Villeneuve, "Who haven't we annoyed today?" because the government seems to go out of its way to annoy various people.

This legislation, while not as radical as some other pieces of legislation, is not likely to gain much support among the general population when they see it is unnecessary. This bill will move through quickly. The government says it's going to listen. The experience has been that unless it has made some technical errors, the government doesn't listen. Guy Giorno in the Premier's office and Tom Long, outside adviser, are the people who make the real decisions in this government, and the rest of the people are here in the government benches simply to applaud, to laugh when the Premier tells a joke and to applaud everything the government does and to read the speeches prepared by the minions in the various ministries, the political advisers, the brain trust of the radical Harris regime.

That's my complaint with this legislation, that it's unnecessary, that it's unnecessarily confrontational. But some of those unelected people who advise the government want to pick a fight. They say: "We've fallen down in the polls. The way you get us back up in the polls is to pick a fight with somebody, somebody that we can make out the public won't like. When you do that, somehow you're going to win." That's not the way you build consensus in the province. When you think of what the Davis administration wanted to do, the Robarts administration, it was to build a consensus, to find a compromise acceptable to all. That's not good enough for the zealots. The zealots in the Harris regime will move forward, trampling the rights of the working people in this province, unnecessarily passing legislation to take away rights which had been won after many years, rights which by and large are not exercised frequently in this province.

I wonder why you're annoying the police. I met with Niagara Regional Police Force representatives. Many in the past have been supportive of this administration. They were beside themselves over the fact that the government would include them in this legislation. They felt they have their own legislation out there, that it's worked well, and they were hoping they wouldn't be included. They can't be bought off, either, simply by taking them out of this legislation, because now they see that others are affected by this bill and they are joining with those others who are affected across this province by the provisions of this bill.

I mention a few of them: the general municipal workers, those who are in libraries and transit, municipal police, fire, local social and health services, the non-teaching people in the school boards, the part-time teachers in school boards, the nurses and the non-nurse hospital staff — all these people affected because this government is involved in many disruptive and unnecessary amalgamations and restructuring.

Where there is consensus — and there has been sometimes in the province — for an amalgamation, that makes sense, but an imposed amalgamation does not. The real losers ultimately will be the whole population of Ontario. When you have a discontented workforce, when you have employees out there who are no longer loyal because they see their rights being set upon by the government, they aren't going to be able to function as well as they have in the past. They won't have that enthusiasm they've always brought to the job. They won't have that commitment, the determination, to perform at their very peak capacity when they see that the government is taking away their rights.

Of course you'll be introducing companion legislation shortly to rein in the teachers as well in this circumstance. I know a lot of these people. By and large, they are not militant. They prefer to be working with children in the classroom and doing so in a non-confrontational way. But again the government will push them to the wall. We heard in the House today an answer to a question by my colleague the member for Fort William, the Liberal education critic, Lyn McLeod, that the government is going to embark on a $2-million advertising campaign, yet another advertising campaign.

While I am speaking of this, I wonder if anywhere in here it talks about the Province of Ontario Savings Office, which you are bound and determined, apparently, to privatize. I think you should leave them alone. They're a success. But when I see you embarking upon legislation of this kind, I have to ask myself: What is next? What is going to happen next? Who will be the next victim of Mike Harris and his revolutionaries?

Under the new rules, whoever it is will have that legislation pushed through this House in record time, with less accountability because you've shoved question period back to seventh place. I worry very much about this. I wish I could continue this, but I see we have to rush off. We will be back, Mr Speaker, as you know, tonight at 6:30, and be counting that as another legislative day so that the trains will run on time. The revolutionaries will like it, but I suspect some of the really cautious, thoughtful people in the government caucus will be concerned about that, and so they should be.

**The Speaker:** It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:30 of the clock today.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

## Tuesday 26 August 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Social assistance**
Mr Sergio ..... 11483
**Refugees**
Mr Kormos ..... 11483
**Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital**
Mr McLean ..... 11483
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Cleary ..... 11484
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Martin ..... 11484
**Sarnia economy**
Mr Boushy ..... 11484
**Road safety**
Mr Kwinter ..... 11484
**Public libraries**
Ms Lankin ..... 11485
**Canada Summer Games**
Mr Clement ..... 11485

### FIRST READINGS

**Scarborough Entertainment and Convention Corporation Act, 1997,** Bill Pr86, *Mr Jim Brown*
Agreed to ..... 11486
**Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 1997,** Bill 153, *Ms Bassett*
Agreed to ..... 11486
Ms Bassett ..... 11486

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Tuition fees**
Mr McGuinty ..... 11486
Mr Harris ..... 11486
**Hospital restructuring**
Mr Kennedy ..... 11487
Mr Harris ..... 11487, 11490, 11491
Mr McGuinty ..... 11490
Ms Lankin ..... 11491
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Silipo ..... 11488
Mr Leach ..... 11488
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11489
Mr Sterling ..... 11489
Ms Churley ..... 11490
**Social assistance**
Mr Maves ..... 11492
Mrs Ecker ..... 11492
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Phillips ..... 11492
Mr Harris ..... 11492
**Niagara Escarpment Commission**
Ms Churley ..... 11492
Mr Hodgson ..... 11493
Ms Martel ..... 11493
**Home care**
Mr Doyle ..... 11493
Mr Jackson ..... 11493
**Government advertising**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11494
Mr Snobelen ..... 11494
**Charitable gaming**
Ms Lankin ..... 11494
Ms Mushinski ..... 11494
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11495
**Automobile insurance**
Mr Tascona ..... 11495
Mr Sampson ..... 11495

### PETITIONS

**Standing orders reform**
Mr Bradley ..... 11496
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11496
**Court decision**
Mr Tascona ..... 11496
Mrs Munro ..... 11497, 11499
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11498
Mr Conway ..... 11498
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11497
Mr Gravelle ..... 11498
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Wildman ..... 11497
**Fish and wildlife management**
Mr Cleary ..... 11497
**Occupational health and safety**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11497
**Water chlorination**
Mr Chudleigh ..... 11498
**Pay equity**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11498
**Vehicle registration fees**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11499

### SECOND READINGS

**Public Sector Transition Stability Act, 1997,** Bill 136, *Mrs Witmer*
Mr Christopherson ..... 11499, 11505 11508, 11519
Mrs Marland ..... 11503, 11516, 11520
Mr Gravelle ..... 11504, 11508, 11516
Mr Len Wood ..... 11504, 11513
Mr Baird ..... 11504
Mr Maves ..... 11505, 11509, 11512 11517
Mr Galt ..... 11508
Mr Bradley ..... 11509, 11513, 11520 11521
Mr Ramsay ..... 11509, 11513
Mr Pouliot ..... 11512
Mr Martin ..... 11514, 11517
Mr Wildman ..... 11517
Mr Tascona ..... 11518, 11520
Mr Patten ..... 11519
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11523

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Visitor**
The Speaker ..... 11485
**Speaker's rulings**
The Speaker ..... 11485


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mardi 26 août 1997


### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario,** projet de loi 153, *M^me^ Bassett*
Adoptée ..... 11486

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 visant à assurer la stabilité au cours de la transition dans le secteur public,** projet de loi 136, *M^me^ Witmer*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11523

Government Publications

No. 219B

Nº 219B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

**Tuesday 26 August 1997**

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Mardi 26 août 1997**

SEP 3 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

**Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

**Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

**Renseignements sur l'Index**

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

**Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

**Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 août 1997

*The House met at 1830.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1997 (NO. 2)

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO (N$^{O}$ 2)

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 148, An Act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new City of Toronto / Projet de loi 148, Loi traitant de questions se rapportant à la constitution de la nouvelle cité de Toronto.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, would you ascertain whether or not there's a quorum in the House?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Would you please check if there is a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Lankin:** A historic moment under the new rule changes, the first evening sitting, and of course the government that needs these sittings to get its agenda through doesn't have enough members here to have quorum at the beginning.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms Lankin:** Pursuant to standing order 24(d), I want to indicate that I will be sharing the remainder of the time on the clock for my leadoff speech with the member for Dovercourt.

It's unfortunate that I'm forced into a position of having to hand over part of the time on the clock, because as a representative of a Toronto riding I feel very strongly about this bill and of course its predecessor, the megacity bill. But unfortunately the short notice with respect to tonight's sitting and the order being called left me in a position of having the floor in this debate and having spent two and a half months organizing a town hall meeting in my riding. No accommodation has been made so I'm in a position at this point in time of having to speak just for a few minutes and leave to get to my riding for this event. I organized it; I have to be at it. I have no choice. I regret that I am unable to fully participate in this debate because there are a lot of things I wanted to cover.

When I began speaking on this bill last week, I was attempting to highlight for the public and for members of the Legislature who perhaps have not yet been through the bill the contents of this. I spoke about the first eight sections of the bill, dealing with issues like pensions and benefits of municipal employees, talking about contracts between municipalities on water and sewage works, talking about road access and street vending, a number of transportation issues around the TTC, composition of police services boards, official plans under land use planning in the various municipalities, boards of health, health and welfare, parks and recreation. I went through about the first eight sections.

The remainder of the bill, and I don't have time to detail it in the same way, deals with things such as the public library boards. Again, here's an area where we have a forced amalgamation or merger going on with respect to the library boards, on the very day where it was reported this week the Metro Toronto Reference Library, the jewel in the crown of libraries, is closed. The doors are closed due to funding cuts as a result of the pressures and the downloading that have come from the provincial government.

There are certainly impacts on many local libraries as well, and I referred earlier today to libraries in my riding, such as the Kew Beach library and the Main Street library, and in the East York area, such as the Walter Stewart library, the Dawes Road library, all of which have seen staff reductions through attrition, all of which have seen an inability to purchase materials at the same quantity and level as before, cancellation of periodicals and other sorts of things, and which really fear, as a result of the government legislation that has been passed, the introduction of user fees which will affect accessibility.

Here's an area in terms of what happens with those boards and how the boards are composed and what that means in terms of the governance of our libraries where people will want to look to this bill and have an opportunity to comment on it.

Similarly, part X deals with the historical board and part XI the licensing commission, again an area that has had a lot of controversy over the years and a lot of problems. It's not clear that the changes here are going to improve that situation. I think it's an area where people who have dealt with the licensing commission — and there are many small business owners who, whether through the taxicab licensing section or through licensing

of street vendors and others, may want to take a look at this section. The Toronto Parking Authority is another area that's affected by this bill.

Then there are tax rates, debentures that have to do with what sorts of outstanding mortgages — let me call them mortgages — have been made on capital developments by municipalities, assets etc. Then there are a number of miscellaneous sections that deal with harbour commissioners, emergency measures, emergency call system like 911, noise bylaws, on and on and on.

We know the transition is going to be a difficult and complex process, and there are many issues that are brought to light during such a transition of six municipalities into a megacity and what means with all of these services.

There are other sections that deal with the transitional powers of the new councils and what that means. That deals with a whole range of municipal bodies, like the transit commission, the boards of health, parks and rec, Toronto library board, historical board, licensing commission. Similar to the sections that deal with what the new powers will be, there are transitional powers that come in under this section and there are consequential amendments as a result of all of those.

That doesn't give you a good sense of all of the content of the bill, but it's sort of a thumbnail sketch of the breadth and complexity of this particular bill.

In the few minutes I have before I have to leave to go to my meeting in Beaches, which is dealing with the community's opposition to the government forcing a charitable casino into our neighbourhood, I want to address a couple of aspects in particular.

Bill 148, which is an act to deal with transition matters in the establishment of the new megacity, of course is necessary. It's necessary because the government passed megacity legislation in the first place, despite the overwhelming objection of the majority of people in Metropolitan Toronto. Now we are forced to deal with a number of very significant transition issues.

The concern I have is that the complexity of this means that it really does need public scrutiny, and the government, as we see with these new rules, I believe you will see — and I don't have any information on this — this is the second day of debate, we will have one more day this week — a time allocation motion come in and the government will move very quickly on this to shut down debate. I am not convinced that the public will have the time to understand the breadth of the complexity of the issues that are contained within this bill and the importance of having that public input into these matters of transition and how we go about implementing the transition to the new megacity.

**1840**

One of the shames about that, and I'd say it's becoming a repetitious theme with this government, is that when you move forward so quickly, when you move with such haste and with such lack of concern for the detail, there are unintended consequences. In this case, when we're talking about a municipal election this fall and we're talking about an implementation date of January 1, serious mistakes will be made. You are not giving people time to give you the input you require to follow through with good governance.

We did on many occasions say, even though we disagreed with your megacity approach, please look at a one-year transition period and holding off the municipal elections for a year to allow these specific transition issues to be dealt with, particularly to allow them to be dealt with in the context of the download that's going on from the province. Municipalities, not just in Metropolitan Toronto but across the province, have been left with a complete sense of bewilderment about what the impact will be, what the numbers actually are. There's a discrepancy between the municipalities' numbers and the government. The government has refused to sit down and work through that. People out there don't know what the impact will be.

In Metropolitan Toronto, we're going to have to deal with that huge download of additional costs, with the huge download of the social housing costs, with what that will mean in terms of additional taxes, at the same time as dealing with such a complex transition as going from six municipalities to one megacity.

I suggest to the government that the time line you have in your minds for this bill will not be sufficient. I think your deadlines in terms of the municipal election on January 1 are totally unrealistic. I fear chaos, but I urge you, please at least in this process give sufficient time between second reading debate and the committee hearings so that the public, where I've indicated the bill might be of interest to various parts of our communities, has a chance to look at it and understand the impact and come forward to give you advice on the transition.

I'd love to go back and fight the megacity fight again. Can't do that. This is how we're going to implement what is a very flawed plan. So please, let's at least try and get the implementation right.

The other point I want to make —I implore the government members to please listen to my plea on this. I want to speak very personally about a community I spend a lot of time working with, the borough of East York, about what the impact of the composition of the new city council means for the residents of East York and for the effective working of the community council, the provision for which is contained within your megacity legislation, and a proposed solution to a dilemma.

I, as many of you know, have introduced a private member's bill which would effect a change in the level of representation for the borough of East York. Currently, in the proposed new megacity most new councillors will be representing a population base in a ratio of about one councillor to 36,000 or 37,000 residents. In the borough of East York the number is one councillor to 54,000 residents. There is a huge anomaly there in the equity or the level of representation.

The other thing that is important for the government members to think about is that in the composition of the new megacity council, as it was put forward in your megacity bill, the borough of East York will only have

two councillors. At the same time, you put into the legislation an attempt to deal with the concern about the ongoing neighbourhood, local governance, local control. You put into your legislation a proposal for community councils based on the old municipal boundaries, the city, or in this case the borough, boundary.

What that means is that the community council for East York will be comprised of only two councillors. It is not feasible, it is not workable. It will not be an effective community council.

I believe that your proposal for community councils was an attempt to respond to the criticism. I think it falls short of the mark, but I understood that you were trying to respond to the need to have ongoing local governance, local control, and the community councils are supposed to fit that bill. Two councillors from East York will not work. It will not be feasible. Given the government's agenda, the volume of bills the government has indicated they're necessarily going to pass before the end of December, I know there is next to no chance that my private member's bill would be called forward. There isn't time on the government's agenda, and we know that the government's agenda always takes precedence over private members' bills. That's fine; that's the way it works.

I tried to think how else I can address this issue. In a strange twist of fate, Bill 148 gives me that opportunity. I have prepared four amendments in which I've tried to deal with all the concerns the government has raised about this. My amendments attempt to address this issue of lack of equitable representation for the residents of East York. The residents of East York have been calling for a third councillor so that at least there is a community council of three and there is closer to equitable representation in terms of a councillor-to-population ratio.

I've put this forward in the House. I've talked to government members. There's some sympathy for the issue, but the response has been twofold. First, it has been pointed out to me that that could cause a problem in terms of the overall council, that you'd have an even number of people now in the overall council and that conceivably at some point there might be a tie and there wouldn't be a tie-breaker. So in addition to an amendment to Bill 148 which would provide for three councillors for East York, I have an alternative I'm putting forward which would provide for four. That would address the issue that people have raised around the potential deadlock on a megacity council.

The other concern I have heard — it's not a concern. In fact, the minister's response to me is that there is an ability for the new megacity council to make decisions around readjusting boundaries in the future. They can do that, right? They can change the boundaries, bring forward a private bill, a city bill or whatever, and it would be passed regularly through this Legislature. They can do that.

The problem with that, and I urge government members to please think about this, is that the new megacity council can't bring that into effect until another municipal election three years from now. In this crucial period of transition, of trying to make the new megacity council work, of trying to ensure that your own proposal for local governance and local control, the community councils, is effective, you need to deal with this issue now, not three years from now. So I'm putting forward two other amendments. This is to give you a whole range of options, and hopefully one of many of these options will find favour with the majority government members on the committee.

The other alternative I will put forward is that these proposals be considered as a transition measure — this bill is about transition — so that for the first term of the new megacity council, the borough of East York has either three or four — I'm still giving you that alternative — councillors elected as a transition measure. That would then allow the new megacity council to look at this issue, to rejig boundaries, to come forward with what they think makes sense, which may be the same as this — they may continue it — or they may do something different.

It allows the council to do that. The minister in his response to me said that's where the decision should be made. That's fine in the future, but this ensures that from day one of the new megacity council the residents of East York have equitable representation and have the possibility of having an effective, working community council.

I've tried to address all the concerns of the government. Those amendments will be tabled before the committee that will be dealing with Bill 148. It will take the will of the majority of the government members to make this happen. I know you'll be hearing from the members of the public in support of this. There is general support from many of the people who have had concerns about the megacity, across all of Metro Toronto with respect to this, and certainly there is massive support within the borough of East York.

It is a simple problem for you to fix, but it is an incredibly important and meaningful problem to the residents of East York. It is about democratic representation. It is about equity and fairness in democratic representation. It is about the ability of a community to have input into local governance issues through a community council that actually can work, that can be effective, that can be perhaps the solution to the concerns raised about your megacity bill which you attempted to address by the community council proposition.

**1850**

The choice is yours. Four amendments: one to bring about three councillors in East York; one to bring about four, if you're worried about a deadlock or an even number or a tie on the megacity council; a third proposal, which is a transitional and temporary measure that has, for the first term of the new megacity council, either three or possibly four councillors; and to allow the megacity council then to determine and rejig its boundaries and ensure that there's equitable representation in the future based on the needs as they perceive them.

If you don't take steps with respect to any of these, you leave the residents of East York underrepresented and with a community council that is doomed to failure. I don't believe that the government wants its new megacity to fail or the transition measures to fail. I don't believe that they

want one borough or a municipality out of the municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto to feel like they have been unfairly and badly treated by the government in comparison to other municipalities.

As much as I disagree with the underlying premise of having moved to the megacity, I believe the government will want to see a rational and fair method of representation.

If you have any other concern, please let me know. There's time in the next week or so before we know committees are coming. I can work with the minister or with the parliamentary assistant to draft other amendments that may be more acceptable to the government, and I'm willing to do that.

What I am imploring of you is, please don't just shrug this off, don't just pooh-pooh the idea. The basic right of equitable and fair representation and effective structures and bodies like the community council is one that I would think in theory this government would assert itself in favour of. I'm asking you, don't only do it in theory. I'm asking you to do it in practice.

I hope you might be able to find a way to work together with me to ensure that the residents of East York have fair, equitable, democratic representation under the new megacity council.

With that, I will wrap up and turn the floor to my colleague the member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I want to thank my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine for beginning debate for us on this important bill last week when I wasn't able to be here.

My comments are going to follow very much the tone and the direction she has set out. Really, this bill in and of itself, as the minister himself has said, is largely both technical or administrative in nature but also necessary, as my colleague indicated, if you've bought into the basic premise, as obviously the members of the government have, that the city of Toronto should exist as of January 1 in the way in which Minister Leach and Premier Harris and members of the Tory government want it to exist, that is, as one large city of 2.3 million people as opposed to any number of smaller municipalities.

I want to reiterate once again my personal opposition to that notion and that of our NDP caucus, that is, our opposition to the notion that there should be, as of this January 1, one large megacity in Metropolitan Toronto. We said it was wrong at the time the bill was brought in. We said it was wrong at the time the government proceeded with the bill here and in committee, and then back here in committee of the whole. We believe today that it is still the wrong way to go and we believe time will prove to us and to you that what you are doing is wrong.

That having been said, I want to reiterate, as we have done on many occasions, in committee, in this House, whenever we have gotten into a discussion on this issue, that we are not for one instant, neither now nor when this discussion began some weeks and months ago, of the view that no change should happen.

In fact, we set out very clearly not just some thoughts but a proposal to the government and to the public about how that change should come about. Fundamentally, what is happening here is the creation of a new city that's going to be around not just for the next couple of years; we are setting the parameters for the future governance of the largest metropolis not just in Ontario but indeed in this country. That is not something that should be done in the haphazard way this government has chosen to go about doing it. It is something that should be done with careful thought, with adequate and real consultation and then, yes, with action. Like the government, we agree that something needs to be done, some change needs to come about, but not this kind of change.

First of all, not this kind of change that creates one large megacity of 2.3 million people, and certainly not change in the way it's been brought about, by simply imposing the will of the government, or perhaps even the will of only a few members of the government, imposing that on the people of Metropolitan Toronto in a way that says, "We have made up our minds and we don't care what you think." That has been the attitude. It has certainly been the attitude from the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It has certainly been the attitude that anyone associated with this bill on behalf of the government has taken in defending what they are doing, simply saying: "Change has to happen. We've made up our minds that this is what the change should look like and we don't really care what anybody else says."

Yes, we had hearings in committee. Yes, we heard from hundreds of people. Yes, the government pretended to listen and came in with some amendments, not in committee but back here in the House in committee of the whole, which it sought to indicate dealt with some of the concerns raised when we dealt with the predecessor bill to this, Bill 103.

What we have is still in effect the megacity as we knew it. They have made some changes, increased the number of politicians who will sit on the new council, made a few other changes with respect to clarifying some of the roles of the community councils. They sought to put that as if they had listened to what people said.

But they know and we know and, more important, the public out there knows that the government failed, on this very important issue, to listen to the first and most fundamental message that came across to the government and to this Legislature in this whole process. It was crystallized through the referendum that was held here in Metropolitan Toronto, but we heard it in spades as well during the hearings on this bill. We heard it during the whole public discussion that took place in the media, in various meetings throughout Metropolitan Toronto and in any conceivable way that anyone who sought and wanted to listen would have heard it.

That message was clearly this: While people agree and while people were prepared to accept that some change was needed, change with respect to the governance and the structure of governance in Metropolitan Toronto, what people said very clearly was that they did not want one

massive local city. They saw that and I see that as a contradiction in terms. You cannot have, in the realm of local governance, one massive local government of 2.3 million people. It is just too large, it is just too cumbersome, it is just too far away from people. It is just too contrary to the basic notion of what local government is supposed to be.

Local government is supposed to be, yes, large enough that you can provide services at the municipal level at a reasonable and adequate cost. But it's also supposed to be, and this is fundamental, small enough that there is a real relationship between the voters — actually, the residents, whether they are voters or not – of that city, of that municipality, and the people they elect to represent them on that government. That simply will not happen under this mega-council.

**1900**

Now, we can play games. We can play all sorts of games with numbers. We can say, look at the number of representatives on a per-resident basis. But the sheer reality when all that is said and done is that what you have is a massive council which is going to be larger than half of the new Legislative Assembly that will sit come the next provincial election.

You cannot have a council of over 50 people function in any way as a local council in the sense at least that I understand what a local council is supposed to be, which is a council that functions formally but also has the ability to interact among its members in an informal way to make accommodation for various communities, various neighbourhoods, to find solutions, to ensure that although each member represents a particular neighbourhood, a particular set of communities, they also understand and see the logic when another councillor talks about their communities and their areas and their parts of the municipality.

That simply won't happen here. It won't happen because the beast that is going to exist as of January 1 of next year is just too massive, is just too cumbersome, is just too awkward to allow for that kind of give and take, to allow for that kind of interaction, to allow for that kind of real representation that should exist and that indeed, with all its imperfections, has existed in Metropolitan Toronto for the last number of years.

What should happen? Of course, it certainly is easy enough to stand here and criticize whatever action the government has taken. They have given us lots of opportunities to do that. But we have also set out — we set it out early and I want to reiterate it for members of the government, not that I have any illusion at this point that anything other than what is in front of us and obviously what has already been passed is going to come about, and we will then have to see down the line what changes can be made to that. But we had set out, and I think it's important for the record to reiterate that, what we believe to be the way to go in making change, in bringing about change in dealing with the governance in Metropolitan Toronto and with the delivery of services and the creation of new structures to govern the largest metropolis, as I said, not just in Ontario but indeed in this country.

That was to start not with Metropolitan Toronto as the boundary of concern but with what we all know today to be the real entity that exists that binds that community at the larger level, which is the greater Toronto area. In fact, two previous studies, two significant studies — the Golden report and then the work that David Crombie did with his panel — supported this notion that the first line of attention should be paid to the greater Toronto area, how that entity functions, how that entity is governed and how that entity provides for the delivery of services, whether those services have to do with waste management, with public transportation, with any other line of services that one could stand here and recite; that in fact the economic entity today is not limited to Metropolitan Toronto and it certainly can't be looked at in isolation of the rest of the greater Toronto area.

That being the case, the first thing that should be done, in our view, is not the amalgamation of the local area municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto, but indeed the amalgamation of the upper-tier levels of government — that is, the five regional governments, Metro and the other regional governments — into one larger regional government.

I understand the hesitation this government would have in creating one large government for what would then be 4.3 million people, but at the regional level that is what's needed because the region today is the greater Toronto area. Having said that, I hasten to say that I personally believe there would need to be, and there should be, some examination of what those boundaries are. It's probably appropriate for us to look at some of the areas in the further regions of what we've come to know as the 905 area and to see that there may not be as much logic for those areas to become part of that new GTA. But the essence is there. So the first line of attention would have been, and we believe still should be, to pay attention to that.

What the government is doing instead, as you know, is they have now said on the basis of the Milt Farrow study that they will probably be moving in that direction in terms of a coordinating body. But it's still putting it backwards; it's still putting the cart before the horse; it's still not getting to what needs to happen, which is a governing structure there and first.

Secondly, within that we had suggested, yes, take a look at the local municipalities. Once you have dealt with the regional issues, take a look at what you should do with respect to the governance at the local level, at the level that is closest in terms of a day-to-day relationship to the people, and make some changes and look at what should happen: Should we continue with the same number of municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto? Should we reduce them? Should we accept the existing boundaries around Metropolitan Toronto as natural boundaries any more for those new local councils?

Is there any difference when you are standing on the south side of Steeles Avenue as opposed to the north side of Steeles Avenue in Metropolitan Toronto? Obviously there is, in the sense that you are in two different municipalities. Under the government's actions, you will con-

tinue to be. But in terms of the flow of people, in terms of the way in which people come back and forth to work, to shop, to do whatever they do, there is no logic any more. That boundary is no longer a real boundary. The same argument could be made for the boundary that today divides Etobicoke from Mississauga.

I'm not suggesting you simply amalgamate those municipalities, but I am suggesting that should have been the second area of examination. If the government had done its work properly and had done the work in the right order, there would have been consensus reached, or at least general agreement reached, as we have seen in the responses that have come not just from within Metropolitan Toronto but from the so-called 905 area, that the first problem to have been addressed and still to be addressed has to do with the coordination of services across the greater Toronto area, has to do with the recognition that it is the greater Toronto area that is now, today, the region. It is no longer Metro, it is no longer Peel region, it is no longer York region or any of the other regions; it is the greater Toronto area. As I said, we can argue a little bit about what those new boundaries should be, but that is the entity that we should be first and foremost concerned with. Secondly, within that, we should be prepared to look at what changes we would make.

We said to the government that we understand the need for action. We are not simply saying and we did not at the time simply say, "Just don't do anything for another three or four years." We are now on the eve of a municipal election. We've put forward this proposal. There were still some six months left. We said to the government: "If you have to, delay the municipal elections by a year. Take the time to do the job right. Take the time to talk to people properly, to listen to what they have to say, but also, by deferring the elections by a year, indicate very clearly that there would be action following that consultation." We said we would be prepared to work with the government to bring about facilitation of that process, a real discussion with people, and hopefully arrival, through that kind of process, at some answers.

That didn't happen. It didn't happen because the government chose not to listen. It didn't happen because the government chose to just go on its merry way once Al Leach and Mike Harris had decided that what they were going to do was to simply come in with this notion of one single government in Metropolitan Toronto. In my view, they made up their minds and told the rest of cabinet and the rest of caucus that that was the decision.

**1910**

I'm sure at the time there was no sense within the government about the fallout, both political and in terms of its impact out there on people, that would come about as a result of that decision. At that time, you'll recall, the proposal had to do with putting it in a way that said, "We're reducing municipalities and we're reducing politicians." Such a simple and straightforward message that seemed to make so much sense to Mike Harris and Al Leach: "We're cutting the number of politicians, we're cutting the number of municipalities and, by the way" — this wasn't said, but it was also there — "we're doing it to Toronto." In some of the outlying areas outside Toronto, what more appealing approach is there to public policy-making than saying, "We're doing it to Toronto"?

As I see it, as I see what's happened over the last number of weeks and months, the plan simply backfired. It backfired because people began to understand what this government was doing.

It's somewhat ironic that tonight we are beginning what I'm sure will be a long series of evening sittings between now and Christmastime so this government can get its agenda through under these new draconian rule changes. It's ironic and there's perhaps some kind of insane logic to the fact that we are beginning these evening sessions with the companion bill to Bill 103, Bill 148, a bill that is basically step 2 in the implementation of the megacity here in Metropolitan Toronto.

Why do I say that? Because it was the megacity bill that crystallized most clearly and most sharply the understanding and then subsequently the opposition that came about to the download that Mike Harris and his government is now unfolding in spades in front of us. We said at the time that in effect the creation of the megacity here in Metropolitan Toronto was but the first step. We saw the amalgamation of school boards under 104; we are now seeing, through various other pieces of legislation that have been tabled and that are on their way through the various processes of the Legislative Assembly, the full agenda out there.

What are we also seeing? We are seeing also the opposition that began around Bill 103, that crystallized around that issue, that saw people come together in an incredible fashion in meetings, in organizing themselves in various coalitions to fight against the megacity. Both through the committee process here at Queen's Park and also, just as significantly, through the referendum process that was held in Metropolitan Toronto we have seen that opposition to the government's agenda grow and grow and grow, to the point that you have today in the Toronto Star a headline that says, "Laughter Greets Leach's Pledge" on the download as the minister spoke yesterday to AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the annual meeting of that group, the gathering of local politicians from across the province.

We have seen in just a few short months the understanding and the full disclosure of the government's agenda reaching a level where as we have come back from a few weeks of recess over the summer, the government clearly is in some trouble. They are trying very hard, and to some extent still reasonably well, to hide that nervousness, but I tell you, I have not seen this government in such a mess as they are now. We have the minister responsible not able to convince — forget us in the opposition; it's natural that we would be very sceptical about what he says — local politicians, who are not by and large New Democrats. Some of them might be Liberals, but many of them are small-c conservatives and many of them large-c Conservatives. He's not able to convince them that his downloading process and downloading exercise is

going to at the end of the day result in everyone being just fine, everyone being in a position where local property taxes will carry the same kind of weight, the same kind of responsibility they are carrying today.

Why? Quite frankly, because that is not what's going to happen. Local politicians are in the best position to know that. They know how much money it takes to deliver a particular service because they deal with that every single day. That's their job. When they see the shifting around that's going on and they see that the numbers don't balance out, they're now beginning to ask: "Oh, my God, what are we going to do? How are we going to impress upon this government that what they are doing will result in increases in property taxes if we continue to deliver the same level of service, or alternatively, it will mean we will have to make not just some small cuts" — we're beyond the small cuts — "but some severe, drastic cuts to the services we are providing if we want to maintain a no-tax-increase approach?" which many of them do. With a public that right across this province is tired of tax increases, that's the one thing we can all agree on.

Here's the situation these local politicians find themselves in. Do they simply quietly say to the government — many of them, as I said, Conservatives — "What you're doing is wrong. We need some help here"? They've done that. They've done that quietly behind closed doors, behind the scenes, through the various groups that have been set up, but still the government hasn't heard, still the government hasn't listened.

Now what are they doing? They're saying it more loudly. They're saying it as they did yesterday at AMO by passing a resolution on Bill 136. That's the other bill related to this that allows those same municipalities to adjust the various bargaining structures in a way that you might think would make it easier for them, that the government says will make it easier for them to restructure. Yet AMO passed a resolution yesterday saying, "No, we don't want this bill to go on." Why? Because they know it's not going to be Al Leach who is going to have to handle the problems they will face in their local communities with their bargaining agents, it's going to be them. They don't want to start off in a situation in which they're seen to be carrying the responsibility, or carrying the hatchet, if you will, for Al Leach and Mike Harris.

They're finally realizing — or maybe they realized it a long time ago — that this is the position they're being put in, to do a hatchet job on behalf of Mike Harris. The only way Mike Harris is going to be able to find the money he has to find to pay for the one promise he seems to be intent on keeping, that is, the 30% income tax cut, is to, among other things, significantly shift a lot of the cost for services down to the property tax base.

Yes, at the end of the day Mike Harris will be able to say, and I've no doubt about this, "Look, I've decreased your income taxes by 30%." I believe this Premier will go to any length to keep that one particular promise, but he will do it at the price of our health care system, at the price of our education system, our social service system, and he will do it by putting municipal politicians in the position where they become the hackers or where they have to increase property taxes, and then he's going to try to blame them. He's going to try to blame them either way. If they cut services, he's going to say, "They should have cut other services instead." If they increase taxes, he's going to say: "I didn't tell them to increase taxes. They chose to increase taxes."

This is what's happening and this is what various municipal politicians are now realizing; or, as I said, they probably more likely realized this a long time ago, certainly from everything we've heard. But now, maybe because, as the minister said in the scrum today, they understand that a municipal election is now only weeks away and because they don't want to be in the position where they are carrying the hatchet for Mike Harris, they are speaking out more loudly

**1920**

Now they are saying to the government, individually but also collectively through organizations like AMO: "Enough is enough. If you want to cut, Mike Harris, you take the responsibility for it. If you want to pay for your income tax cut by shifting costs on to the property tax base, you take that responsibility. Don't expect us to do your dirty work for you. Don't expect us to do your hatchet work for you. Don't expect us as local politicians to carry the can for you." They're saying that more and more loudly, more and more clearly.

That's what's got members of the government a bit antsy. That's what got them a little bit nervous. I believe it's high time that happened, and I'm glad it's happening, because I think we are finally seeing a government that's going to have face up to the consequences of its actions. They haven't listened so far to any reasonable argument that's been put. Not just by us — whether we've made reasonable arguments or not I will leave for others to judge — but indeed reasonable arguments put forward by any number of people across this province, that while change is necessary, while restructuring is necessary, you can't do it in this way. Yet the Premier and members of the government shudder when we say, "You are acting in such an ideological way that you are no longer seeing the impact and no longer paying any attention to the impact of what you are doing."

They don't like that, but they don't like that because it's the truth. They don't like it because that in fact is what's happening. They've known that all along. We've known that all along. More and more people across the province have known that all along, but now more and more people across the province are saying that as well. They're not just thinking it. They're not just saying it in their own little conversations. They're saying it out loud.

They're saying it whether they're local politicians, they're saying it whether they're people in any and all walks of life who care about their communities, whether it's in health care, in the disaster of the various hospital closings that we are seeing, in the decrease in services we are seeing in hospitals and other places across the province, whether they're in their school system as parents and students and they're seeing the level and quality of our

education system continually deteriorating under the actions of this government, and they are seeing that in what will be yet to come if the morass of legislation of which 148 is a part makes its way through this Legislature. I think only time will tell whether this government will listen to any of this, to any of those concerns.

I suppose the government would argue that one of the changes they have made, for example, here in Metropolitan Toronto, or indeed in the greater Toronto area, in moving some of the social service costs they have pushed down to the local property tax base from just Metropolitan Toronto to the whole greater Toronto area, somehow was listening to what people have said. I want to tell you very clearly, I for one believe that if you're going to move in that kind of direction of adding these costs to the property tax base, there is lots of logic for having those costs borne across the whole GTA because indeed it is true, in my view, that many of those services that are provided within Metropolitan Toronto are indeed also provided for people who live in the 905 area surrounding.

Maybe not as far as Northumberland. I'm not sure if it was the reeve I heard, but I believe it was the reeve of Northumberland the other day saying something similar to that, saying, "Look, it doesn't make any sense for us to be carrying some of those costs." That's true, maybe not to that extent, but certainly within the area surrounding Metropolitan Toronto, which again comes back to the point of the government having simply put the cart before the horse.

While I can agree that sharing of costs across the whole GTA level makes more sense than simply imposing them on the Metropolitan Toronto property taxpayers, I have to say that the fundamental problem here is the shift downwards to begin with. That's what the government should be addressing. If they were addressing that, then they wouldn't have to deal now with the flak they are getting from their political friends and others in the 905 area. What we are also seeing here on a very political basis, because that's the only level on which this government seems to have any inkling for listening any longer, is that the government's own allies in the 905 area are now also raising their voice very loudly. We will see what will happen.

Bill 148 is a very clear part of that message and of that exercise. Though one could look through it in and of itself and say there is largely not a lot that one could argue against once you've gone through that first step and said, "Yes, there will be one large megacity," there are particular pieces that trouble me, there are particular pieces that trouble people. I look forward to this bill going to committee so that we will have an opportunity to address some of the concerns, certainly the concern that my colleague from Beaches-Woodbine has raised and that I know my colleague from Riverdale shares with respect to the level of representation for East York.

I have to say that the various proposals that have been put forward by my colleagues make a lot of sense to me, and I hope they will make sense to the members of the government. By the way, this notion that having an even number of councillors somehow creates a problem, I'm not sure where that's come from. I'm sure that there are councils across the province that have equal numbers today. I come from a school board background where there were at various stages an even number of trustees. There's a provision written into the Education Act and I'm assuming similar provision exists within the Municipal Act. If not, it can simply be put in that a tie vote is lost. It's as simple as that. You don't have to become concerned about a deadlock. What makes it a deadlock if it's 26 to 26 as opposed to 27 to 25? What's the big difference? Yes, one is a majority, but in a sense the council is split in either case.

One can dream up, I'm sure, lots of reasons not to support the proposals that my colleagues from Beaches-Woodbine and Riverdale have put together, but I ask the government members to think seriously about this. If you at least want to make some small changes in the whole context, but some changes that make some difference to this whole beast, then that's one particular one that you can act on.

There's another one that concerns me, having sat through the process dealing with public libraries. I know that my colleague from High Park-Swansea, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, will remember this one. When we dealt with Bill 109, the new public libraries bill, which I believe has yet to come forward for third reading here in the House, there was almost unanimous agreement at the committee that whatever we thought about what the government was doing — we made it very clear that we disagreed strongly with the direction the government was going in because we thought it was setting up a process of allowing greater use of fees for public library services that today are free.

They're taking the protection that exists today of free access to materials that now exists in legislation, they're taking that out of legislation and are purporting to put that into a regulation which they can obviously change, as people will know, by a simple decision of cabinet without it having to come back through the legislative process.

But aside from that there was, as I was saying, almost unanimous agreement in the committee that within Metropolitan Toronto, to come back to this area, there was a unique nature to the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library in that it provided a service that was different from all other public libraries because it serves as a reference library not just to Metropolitan Toronto but indeed to the whole province and that there was some sense, a lot of sense, in fact, to continuing the governance of that very important institution separate from the creation of other library boards.

We knew at the time, and we see it in the legislation now, that within Metropolitan Toronto, within the new city of Toronto, there will be now one large library board. At the time I thought there was some agreement even from the government members that there would be a separate governance structure allowed, continuing the existing structure for the Metro reference library.

**1930**

This is the place where that change can be made. At the time, we were told they were not prepared to take an amendment to Bill 109, so we agreed in a proposal I put forward to refer our amendment that would have done that to the transition team looking at the various transition issues, the areas to make recommendations on. We have yet to hear from that group, but my hope is that we will hear back. I will certainly be looking for some answers back on that in time for this bill being in committee, with the hope that if that support continues to be there, as I think I saw it at the time from the government members, we can at least make another change that will ensure that the Metro Toronto Reference Library continues as a separate institution from the amalgamated new city of Toronto library board.

There are other areas where various people have clearly stated concerns, some of which are quite useful. For example, that the present provision for land use planning should continue until there are changes made is wise. I think it's useful at least to allow for transition.

Concerns have been expressed by people across Metropolitan Toronto that by pooling the assets of the various local municipalities, such as the parking assets — Mr Sewell makes this point in an article he wrote — you are setting up a situation in which the assets of the city of Toronto parking authority, valued, in his words, at $150 million, are far above the assets of the only other parking agency in Metro, that run by North York. There may be some problems with that.

That can be juxtaposed with the issue of what happens with reserves. There are a number of issues in this bill that we will need to look at in some detail, a number of issues that people will be interested in speaking to.

Quite frankly, the one area I don't see in this bill and that I will be looking forward to hearing about from the members of the transition team is, what about the work of the transition team? What about the work the transition team is doing now? I know it is going to end up in a report that will go in front of the new council, but what about legislative changes that will need to be made as a result of the work they will do? Where is any of that?

Where is the result of the work going on now in terms of looking at the community councils, in terms of looking at what the appropriate structures are? What are the appropriate structures that should be set up if the government is intent on proceeding with this massive new megacity? Is it a given, and should it be a given, that you should simply amalgamate all the area boards, whether library boards or any other boards, into one massive board, or, given that this is an issue that's very much alive, being looked at now by the transition team, might you come up with different models?

If you're going to have community councils established for what are now the existing area municipalities, is it not logical that you might have some of these services, if not all of these services, looked at through a process that involves those community councils? Why is that no longer an option? Why does the government seem, by virtue of this legislation, to have closed the door to that possibility?

On the flip side of that, what can be said about the validity of the consultation the transition team is carrying on? I remind people, this is a group of people appointed by this government. What can be said about the validity of their process if the government, in a number of areas, on a number of issues, seems to have already made up its mind? Is this simply step 2, in the same way step 1 was carried out? Is this Al Leach saying again: "I don't care what anybody else out there says. This is the way I think it should work and this is what I'm going to do"?

Is there any room left for this government to listen to what people out there have been saying? People are still opposed, just as they were when they voted 76% against the megacity, but if it's going to happen, they want at least some say in what it's going to look like. They want to have some understanding and some sense that through the community councils they will be able to have some input into the ongoing decision-making.

In a number of areas this bill precludes that. In a number of areas this bill says: "No, thank you very much. You can have all the discussion you want" about your concerns with respect to libraries, parks and recreation, health and welfare, any of those areas, the things that make the various area municipalities and indeed the Metro Toronto councils function and function reasonably well. This government is saying, "We're not particularly interested in what you have to say in those areas because we think amalgamating all those bodies into one body for the whole new city is the way we should go." That's regardless of the surveys now being done by the transition team, in the community meetings held in each of the municipalities by that team, in the various discussions going on; that's despite the fact that as a result of those discussions and that input, a consensus might be arrived at that is very different from what's in this bill.

I don't know if there is any willingness on the part of this government to make any changes. I guess we will see. I hope that as we go through this process, this bill will get out to committee and we will hear from members of the transition team about those very issues, about what they have been listening to, what they have been hearing and what they are prepared to recommend, not just to the new council but to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach, about what changes should be made to this piece of legislation.

If this government is intent on putting through this legislation, at least in the way the megacity is structured there may still be some semblance of local involvement, some level of local input, some ability for people to provide their views and feel that their views can be heard in some way. I don't see that here. If the government were serious about that, they would have either held off on this piece of legislation, if they weren't going to hold off on the whole thing, or indicated very clearly in presenting this legislation that they are open to changes as we go through the process. But I didn't hear that. I didn't hear that from the minister when he introduced the bill. I didn't hear that

from the minister in looking over his comments in Hansard when he began second reading debate on this bill. He simply said: "This is an administrative bill. It has to be done to implement the new megacity."

I want to end by reiterating the same message we have been putting forward on this throughout this whole process, which is that we are fundamentally as opposed today as we were when Bill 103 was even dreamt up, opposed to the megacity concept. We are prepared to collaborate with respect to change, but if the megacity is going to happen, there will have to be changes made beyond Bill 148 to make that work.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It was interesting hearing the two members, one from Beaches-Woodbine — it was hard to know what bill she was really talking about; I thought Bill 148 was the topic we were on — and then the member for Dovercourt.

The member for Dovercourt made a lot of reference to the AMO conference. Actually, I spent quite a bit of time down at the AMO conference, and I'd like to refute some of the comments he was making about it. I received some 22 delegations on behalf of the Minister of Environment, and I can tell you that almost to a person, and there were probably 100 people in those 22 delegations, they were very supportive of what this government is doing. Yes, they have some concerns, they need some information, and that's understandable, but over and over again they were supporting what we're doing and where we're going. I can tell you, in the hallways and the various rooms there was a real air of confidence in the direction this government is going, getting rid of the duplication, getting rid of overlap and sorting out the responsibilities, the kind of responsibilities the municipalities should have and the kind of responsibilities the Ontario government should continue with. There was just no question: a very, very positive feeling there.

This bill is going to ensure that important services like the Toronto Transit Commission and city-owned attractions such as the Metro Zoo and the Hummingbird Centre and Exhibition Place continue to operate as usual. In addition, this bill would give the new city the same authority to carry out routine duties which Metro council currently has under the Metro Toronto act.

I heard the member for Dovercourt make reference to this bill being technical and necessary. There's no question that this bill is technical, and it is necessary to make everything happen the way it should here in Toronto.

**1940**

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I'd like to compliment the member for Dovercourt. I think he gave a very refreshing view of the situation, and very well put, because I think he repeated practically everything we have heard since the first day.

**Interjection:** Insightful and intelligent.

**Mr Sergio:** Absolutely, indeed yes. He listened to the people who made submissions during the three weeks of public hearings and has very succinctly repeated in the House for the benefit of the members what the people said to the Premier and the minister: "All right. You want a megacity. How are you going to do it? How is it going to work? Who is going to pay for it? How much is it going to cost? Give us some information and some figures."

Unfortunately, even the minister himself yesterday said: "We don't have all the facts. We don't have all the figures." When 78% of the people in Metro said: "Let us know. How are you going to do it? What is it going to cost? Is it going to cost us more money?" and the minister cannot provide that information, I think we have good reason to be leery about how this government is proceeding.

The people in Metro said, "We don't want Metro, but if you're forcing it on us, show us how this is going to be affecting the people in Metro and beyond Metro."

I have to compliment the member for Dovercourt. When we are dealing with such a huge issue that eventually is going to affect not only Metro but well beyond the boundary of Metro, I think we have a right to know and the people have a right to know.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I listened to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who split her time with the member for Dovercourt. Having listened to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, she was holding this bill and reading out some of its contents and talking about the possibly devastating implications of some of these amalgamations. In fact the member for Beaches-Woodbine was speaking very clearly to this bill.

The members for Dovercourt and Beaches-Woodbine were very involved in the local megacity fight which, as we all know by now, 78% overall voted against. I want to congratulate both members. The member for Dovercourt is our critic in the area and carried the bill through for us and is quite knowledgeable about the contents of that bill and also this one.

I think it's incumbent upon the members of the government to listen a little more closely to what the members of this caucus, particularly from the Metro area, are saying about the implications of this bill. They ought to take it more seriously. I would say that the member for Dovercourt is one of the most knowledgeable people around when it comes to the contents of this bill.

It's very clear to me from the comments made by members of the government that they're not very knowledgeable about it, that they're getting up and just mouthing the government line. Major problems will result from this bill, and the members should listen a little more closely to what the opposition members have to say tonight.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** Whenever I hear the member for Dovercourt or for Beaches-Woodbine, they always speak well in this House, and tonight was up to their usual style of speaking. I must say I really agree with many of the things they say, and tonight was no exception.

It almost sounds like the line they're using is similar to that of the mayor of Toronto, who starts an action against the province with respect to the amalgamation of the various municipalities in Toronto, says how terrible it is, and then decides to run for mayor. It's rather strange. That

type of rhetoric seems to come out of your particular caucus. Why is she running for mayor if she doesn't like what it stands for? It's all very bizarre.

The member for Beaches-Woodbine raised the issue of increasing the number of seats in East York from two to three, and if that caused a problem with voting, if it caused a tie, it would be increased to four. We'll wait and see what her amendments say. What the members didn't say, and I'd be interested in the member for Dovercourt's response if he has time, and he may not, is the rationale. Why that particular municipality? What effect will that have on the other municipalities? Will that throw out the percentage of voting? Is it rep by pop? Those types of issues weren't really elaborated on. They may come out in the committee hearings; we'll wait and see. But to simply say increase the number of seats in a particular municipality, without more rationale, it doesn't make sense.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Dovercourt, you have two minutes.

**Mr Silipo:** I want to thank the members for Northumberland, Yorkview, Riverdale and Dufferin-Peel for their comments on mine and those made by my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

Let me say to the member for Northumberland particularly – I obviously don't know what people have said to him. I'm sure there are still people across the province who do agree with what the government is doing. What I am hearing more and more, even from people who agree with the direction the government is taking, is, "We agree, but — " and then they go on to say that you're going too fast or you're being too unfair or that shifting these costs to the property tax base is not the right way to go.

If all the member for Northumberland is hearing is, "You're doing great work," maybe he needs to talk to a few other people, because he's not getting a sense of where the province is on this one.

Yes, there are many people who still agree with what the government is doing, but there are increasingly people who disagree, and the more people understand what the government is doing, the more that number will grow.

To the member for Dufferin-Peel, I want to say very quickly a couple of things: First of all, I believe that my colleagues the members for Riverdale and Beaches-Woodbine have made the case and will be happy, in committee, to make the argument about increasing the representation for East York. In fact, if you look at it on a proportionate basis, if you went to three, you could do it and still keep the same ratio, largely, that you have for the rest of Metropolitan Toronto. That's something we could look at in committee, in terms of the numbers. I'm sure we can convince the members on that basis that it should be done.

In terms of why people opposed to the megacity are running, I find it not troubling all that Mayor Hall and Mayor Lastman and others perhaps are going to be joining the race. I think that is good, because I think it's important to have people run who understand the problems in implementing the new megacity.

**1950**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** It's a pleasure to add to this debate, in fact to be the first 20-minute speaker, under the House rules, now that the leadoff is done. As we've just seen evidenced only minutes ago, when they had 90 minutes they spent about five minutes on the bill and about 20 minutes each on a variety of other issues. Hopefully, the new rules will help focus debate and bring us back to the topic before us.

For those who are watching, the topic today is Bill 148. Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act, part 2, is the technical integration of all of the services, the sequel to the original City of Toronto Act. This is the meat on the bones, the framework that was built earlier this year. It encompasses all the technical issues related to any restructuring.

The members presumably will all be supporting this bill, because in the alternative, it would be their suggestion that on January 1, no one will own the TCC and no one will own the Exhibition and no one will own the zoo. It will be their submission that pension plans should not migrate and that every worker from the old six cities will not have a pension plan any more. Every one of these issues is purely technical in nature.

More than that, in most cases there were any number of submissions we received during the hearings that we held for Bill 103 — just a bit of a history lesson to remind people: We dedicated over 300 hours of public hearings to Bill 103, the City of Toronto Act. In addition to the committee hearings, we met with any number of individuals, including the municipal politicians.

Without exception, in addition to the philosophical issues that were raised, many people talked about the practical aspects and what would happen to the zoo and the Exhibition grounds and to all of the other assets owned by the different cities. There are myriad rinks and cultural centres, there are the city halls, and more important than even those assets, there are all of those employees, the 54,000 people who work for the seven different municipal governments. Clearly all of the issues related to their employment have to be dealt with fairly and honestly. I find it very telling that we have had an hour and a half from each of the two parties, so a total of three hours so far, and not one specific suggestion about a single clause, a single word in this bill that they find inappropriate, incorrect, or unnecessary.

We've had three hours of the same rant, three hours of the same rhetoric, three hours of continuing to tell the people of this province that everything is wrong. It's doom and gloom and, quite frankly, I think a good case could be made, betraying their oath of office. They're responsible, as we are, for the carriage of this piece of legislation, but more than that, we're responsible for making sure this province works.

When they don't stand and recognize the accomplishments that people in this province have made in these last two years, when they don't talk about the new investments, when they don't talk about the 176,000 new jobs in

the last five months, when they don't talk about the 210,000 people who have been freed from their dependency on welfare in the last two years, when they don't talk about all those benefits and all of the steps forward, I believe that they're not selling a whole message and they're not telling the whole — we can't use the word "truth." They're not telling the whole message to the people out there.

**Interjection:** They don't like good news.

**Mr Gilchrist:** They don't like good news. They believe, even when it's something as purely technical as this bill, that somehow it's their responsibility to stand up and be negative, to bash the government, not to contribute to the process, not to go back and read that bill clause by clause. If there are issues that have been missed, if there are any sections that need to have improved wording in there, the bottom line is that it's their responsibility as the opposition to be bringing those matters to our attention, and this is the forum.

We've had public hearings. There's no need to reinvent the wheel on this one. We've heard from the politicians. We've heard from the citizens of Toronto, York, East York, Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough. We've heard from them about all of the aspects of this bill. In fact, many of them last March, you'll recall, asked us to incorporate many of these details in Bill 103. But we said we wanted to take the time to make sure all of the details were done in as thorough, professional and competent a manner as possible. I believe, again in the absence of a single criticism from the other side, we've done our homework, and I believe this bill satisfies all of those criteria.

The bottom line is that on January 1, we already knew that we would have one city where there were seven before. What we didn't know is what would happen to the pension plans and what would happen to all of those assets and, quite frankly, all of those liabilities. Every one of those issues has now been addressed in here. If I could read a couple of very brief sections out of here:

"Rights preserved

"(2) Nothing in this act...affects the rights...with respect to pensions or benefits on December 31, 1997," of any person employed in any of the old municipalities; "...all pension and benefit plans and funds that meet the following conditions are continued." It goes on in detail, but basically it says that if you're a municipal employee and you belong to a pension plan today or on December 31 of this year, you are guaranteed that the plan will carry over and you won't lose a single benefit under that plan.

It then goes on to say that the municipality, on January 1 and from that point onwards, will have the power to continue to evolve as they see fit.

Mr Speaker, I'm sure you'll recall that back last March when we were listening to all of the debate about the original City of Toronto Act, many people on the other side suggested it was totally inappropriate to interfere in municipal government at all, it was totally inappropriate for us to be constraining their development and constraining the shape of the new city. Now, when we've brought forward something that says precisely that, that you can continue to have the same taxes, which may very well vary from one part of the city to another, you can continue to have the same level of services — North York has twice-a-week garbage pickup; everyone else has once a week. This bill says you can do that. We've given them exactly the freedom, exactly the flexibility they asked for, and having damned us for interfering back in March, they're now damning us for giving the municipalities this power.

That sort of flip-flop is totally inappropriate, and it's not fair to the people of the city. They need to know the facts. They don't need politicking and they don't need rhetoric. I find it very interesting that the Liberals' chief spokesman is not in the chamber here today, that the person who championed the fight against Bill 103 more than anyone else earlier this year is not here today.

The members who were here a few days ago may very well recall that Mr Colle stood up and gave a very impassioned speech. He said this bill and Bill 103 would guarantee the city of Toronto won't work, and he said that there will be chaos. He said there will be no way the new council will be able to handle those responsibilities.

Then I pointed out to this chamber in my response that this same Mr Colle is the campaign co-chairman for Mel Lastman, a man who has gone on record as saying that everything in the city of Toronto unification is doable, that there will be no property tax increase if he is successful. He didn't say not next year; he said there will be no tax increase as a result of amalgamation. That same Mel Lastman went further and said that the Who Does What issues and all of the other transfer in responsibilities between the province and the municipality will also not have a negative impact on the property taxpayers in the city.

I, for one, am having difficulty reconciling how Mr Colle can stand in this chamber and when that TV camera is on suggest to people that he really is a foe of this bill, that he really does not believe the new city of Toronto will work, and at the same time he has allowed his name to be published in every document going out from the Mel Lastman campaign saying that he's the co-chairman. I'll leave it to the other taxpayers and the voters in the city of Toronto to rationalize that dichotomy.

**Mr Sergio:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With all respect, I have been listening quite carefully to the member for Scarborough East, and I do believe that when we address any member of this House, present or not present, it is done in the name of the riding that the member represents. Not only is the member misrepresenting the member who is not present —

**The Deputy Speaker:** You are totally correct, yes. As a matter of fact, this is what I was discussing. You're totally right and I thank you for your help.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I do apologize for not pointing out that Mr Colle is in fact the member for Oakwood. From this point on I will not refer to Mike Colle. I will refer to the member for Oakwood, and trust that in the future on the Mel Lastman literature, instead of "Mike Colle," he publishes "Mike Colle, MPP for Oakwood" so that people can

continue to see that subtle difference between the position he takes here and the position he's taking out on the hustings.

**Interjection:** Flip-flop.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Flip-flop is perhaps the right word.

It was somewhat telling in the comments made by our colleague the member for Dovercourt. He mentioned a number of things in the few minutes that he devoted to the bill, but one of the most interesting comments he made — it's not all embraced in this bill, but he suggested that the creation of the Greater Toronto Services Board somehow is a necessary precursor to the creation of the city of Toronto. In fact, his exact quote was that it doesn't matter whether you live north or south of Steeles; it's same flow of people. There's no logic any more in having that different municipal oversight.

Yet they would suggest to you that even though it has been 44 years since Metropolitan Toronto was created, 44 years since the real amalgamation of this city took place, somehow it's appropriate that the residents on either side of Victoria Park are treated differently, or the residents on either side of the boundary between any of the other cities within Metropolitan Toronto — clearly again an unreconcilable difference.

**2000**

We also heard some comments about whether or not what we've heard in the last eight months really is embodied in this bill in terms of the spirit behind the amalgamation. You should know that late last year any number of polls done not just by the government but any number of third parties, all of the newspapers, back in October and November 1996 showed that support for amalgamation was in the mid-60% range and opposition in the mid-30% range.

Early this year, as the only means through which they could artifice the numbers, the only means through which they could create any kind of ennui in the public, any kind of anxiety, do any fearmongering was to wrap the issue of the city of Toronto amalgamation into Who Does What, into school board reform, into actual value assessment. Quite frankly, they did everything but lump it into bus deregulation. By doing that fearmongering and by taking it off on a number of tangents, they were able to create the spectre that somehow the City of Toronto Act did not hit a responsive chord.

What you won't hear from the opposition parties is that on July 28, CFRB, the largest radio station in Canada, which every day does a people poll, as they call it, posed the question of whether or not you were in support of amalgamation of the city of Toronto. Isn't it interesting that now that we're long beyond fearmongering, long beyond scaring people in this city that somehow the amalgamation is tied into school board reform or any of these other issues, 67% of the people who phoned in to that poll said they're in favour of amalgamation.

I have every confidence that now that we have at least one mayoral candidate and any number of local councillors who have gone on the record as saying they are committed to making it work, they are committed to a tax freeze or a tax decrease and they are committed to ensuring the employees of the cities are fairly treated, that services are not reduced or eliminated and that taxes don't change, now that we have that out there, those numbers will continue to go up in favour of amalgamation.

Let's not dwell on the so-called referenda that were held. I won't waste any time talking about the flawed methodology. What's far more important was what we heard at the public hearings. What's far more important is what we're hearing on the streets of Toronto right now, and people are absolutely convinced, as Mel Lastman is, that this is going to work.

Like my colleague from Northumberland, I was at the AMO conference for the last two days and I received a number of delegations, and while the member opposite again would love to generalize and just throw out the suggestion that somehow there's this groundswell of opposition, I'll name names. The city of Kingston came in and for 15 minutes complimented the government and told us to stay the course, not to make changes to Bill 136, not to change actual value assessment.

**Mr Galt:** Is that where John Gerretsen is from? That's John Gerretsen's riding?

**Mr Gilchrist:** Yes. As my colleague from Northumberland has pointed out, that is a riding represented by a Liberal member.

Quite frankly, in the submissions from the cities in the Ottawa area, their only criticism — in fact it's not even a criticism. It was a question about what will be happening with something called "payments in lieu," because they have a lot of government office buildings in that city.

While we're on the subject of Ottawa, I'm sure the members opposite will remember a former member, so we can use his name now, Mr Bob Chiarelli, a former Liberal member of this chamber up until a few weeks ago. He's now running for regional chairman. Bob Chiarelli has said —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** No new taxes.

**Mr Gilchrist:** "No new taxes." Bob Chiarelli has said he believes the Premier of this province, as do 57% of the people polled this week. They believe we're on the right track and they believe the transfer of services is fair and equitable. They believe it won't have an impact on taxes and they believe it's only appropriate that the municipalities of this province share in the belt-tightening that all aspects of governments under our control have been asked to share.

This bill is a very small piece of a very large puzzle. We're putting together a new vision of Ontario: one that works, one that doesn't have one out of every eight people relying on government assistance, one that encourages investment, encourages enterprise, encourages the development of a work ethic in all of our citizens. That's the vision we're trying to lay out here.

Every day in this chamber we lay another paving stone on that road to prosperity, and every bill is another milestone in that road. The bottom line is, as the member opposite pointed out, that rather than taking the time in this chamber to debate a technical and a necessary bill, we

should be focusing on some of the other initiatives which involve far greater restructuring, far greater courage, I might say, on the part of this government, opening up issues that in some cases are decades overdue for reanalysis. I'm sure you would find us more than willing to enter into that debate.

The bottom line is, they believe it's appropriate to just say every bill is bad, and every action the government takes, they prefer to be negative. The bottom line is that we will make this entire process work far better if there is cooperation and constructive criticism.

Speaking on behalf of our minister, I encourage any suggestions to be made. If there is a way to rework this bill that even better protects the employees in those seven cities, if there's a way to guarantee that their pensions flow seamlessly, that the assets flow seamlessly, that the liabilities and the assets continue to accrue to the benefit of the citizens in the portion of the city where they were created, we're going to listen. So we want to hear those submissions.

Mr Speaker, I'm going to remind you and all the members that this doesn't reopen the issue of amalgamation and the unification of the city. That's a done deal. I don't think the amount of time taken by the member for Beaches-Woodbine talking about interfering in the number of members on the new council, now that we're actually in the middle of the municipal election campaign, is appropriate.

There was a time and a place to make those submissions. Rather than 12,000 frivolous amendments that took nine and a half days of the time of this chamber, it's unfortunate that the member did not see fit to introduce her suggestion as an amendment back then. I'm sure, quite frankly, we would have had far greater enthusiasm for embracing it than we would now when would-be municipal councillors have already printed their literature, have already bought signs, have already rented campaign offices. We're in the middle of the election campaign, and I don't think it would be fair to them, any more than it would be fair to the voters who have already received that literature.

As a final point, I'll remind you that last year we gave 720 hours of committee hearings. The most the NDP gave in their five years was 689. The most the Liberals gave, and their record year was 1989, was 529 hours, 200 hours less consultation.

The biggest chunk was on the City of Toronto Act, and I'm very proud of that. Our ministry in particular has been listening to the people. The bottom line is that we've now brought forward a bill that deals substantively, and I believe very capably, with all the technical issues of the amalgamation. While I expect the rhetoric, I am encouraged that we haven't heard a single criticism of a single clause. I look forward to their support of this bill and I thank you for your indulgence.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** The member for Scarborough East, Mr Gilchrist, the most dangerous thing about what he said —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Curling:** The fact that he believes what he says is the most dangerous thing about him. The only person who believes what you say must be yourself, and that's rather dangerous. He thinks that outside in the community there, they are listening to him. Now let me tell you, Mr Gilchrist, the member for Scarborough East, they don't believe you one bit. They don't believe you at all, you see.

**2010**

One of your government ways is, if the people could just go away, get out of the way of the bulldozers, they could do what they have to. Let me tell you this: With all the referenda showing you they're against what you're doing, if they don't get you now, they'll get you later. They will stop you and they will make sure you and your government don't continue with theses kinds of bully tactics you're going on with. They won't go away.

You always stand up as if you're a great debater. I say to you that the Scarborough cable asks you any time to come and debate with me in Scarborough about this, because they want you there. They don't want you flipping around the place in Quebec and trying to dictate to them. Come to Scarborough and let's talk about some of these issues you're talking about today. You're asking where our members are. Where is your minister who's supposed to be defending this very important bill? He's not here today. Therefore, if you think that's important —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Curling:** I've got to shout over their heads, Mr Speaker.

If you think that's important you'll be here to debate it any day, because no one believes what you're saying anyhow.

**The Speaker:** I just want to remind all members, it's inappropriate to comment on the absence or the presence of any member in the Legislature. I know the member for Scarborough North just mentioned it. I know that some of the government members have mentioned it beforehand. It's inappropriate regardless of who brings it up.

**Mr Curling:** Mr Speaker —

**The Speaker:** No, you had your two minutes. Questions and comments.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I must admit I don't have the opportunity — my loss no doubt — the chance in life to meet too many people like our last speaker, the member for Scarborough East, but I'm very much aware that he has strong opinions indeed, not only on this subject matter but on many subjects. The member for Scarborough East has found his calling. He is not an ambassador — no, no, no. If he were an ambassador, maybe Montserrat would be his final calling.

He truly believes there will be no tax increases, even when his colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing says, "Maybe I was a little too optimistic." Maybe you shouldn't be too pessimistic; I don't know. Municipal leaders down the street at the Royal York are

asking for the figures a mere four months before the sky begins to fall. But the member for Scarborough East wears the blinkers on and on. He is so far to the right of that lot over there, he's almost off the platform. He doesn't have a friend except for very, very close circles, and no credibility. Taxes are about to go up and he's going to wear them. Absolutely.

**Mr Galt:** I'd really like to first compliment the member for Scarborough East for a very impassioned barn-burner type of speech with a tremendous amount of information. The content was absolutely excellent, not to mention also entertaining.

He pointed out that Bill 148 is really a sequel to Bill 103. We've heard a lot about the democratic process and what's going on, He mentioned over 100 hours on one bill, over 100 hours of hearings that we had on that particular bill, all kinds of consultation, really a positive step for democracy. The number of hours of hearings in total that he made reference to and compared to previous governments really is indicative of the kind of consultation this government is going out and doing.

He pointed out that there was so little criticism. You didn't have anything factual at all to point out to tear this bill apart. I gather from that, when you're talking about everything else, that you obviously are supporting Bill 148.

You did talk a lot about doom and gloom. It's unfortunate to see people happy if there's a bit of doom and gloom, and sad when there's some good news. You must be sad a lot of the time when we're seeing things like, since March, 1,000 net new jobs created on a daily basis, 1,000 new jobs every day being created in Ontario, 56% of them here in the province, based on the national total number. The economy is up. Car sales are up. Home sales are up. It must be just terrible to be in opposition and see all of that good news rolling out.

Really what was going on, being mentioned by my friend here from Scarborough East on Bill 148, is we are responding to the concerns of the opposition, the concerns of the public, and this bill is doing just that.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I'd like to comment on the comments made by the member for Scarborough East in his evangelical tone and mode. It almost woke up one of the members sitting on this side, belonging to the government side, but not quite.

The member for Scarborough East talks about putting aside Bill 103 and let's deal now with the administration. It's akin to saying, "Let's put aside that we've taken away something from you and let's talk about how we're going to now manage how things are going to work," because that's the way many people feel in Metro Toronto. I don't think they'll forget that; they will remember that for the next couple of years, at least I hope so.

The member for Scarborough East also talked about the number of hours, and we know how the government has put in numerous hours. I haven't got the time to recite how many bills I've participated in where we've heard testimony that was totally contrary to the proposal of the government, yet when the clause-by-clause phase occurred very little took place. We'll see this in Bill 99, workers' compensation, we'll see it in 136, I suspect, at the same time, although I would be delighted to be wrong.

The member for Scarborough East talks about the comments of Mr Bob Chiarelli, where he said he will commit himself to not raising taxes. I suggest to you that he has taken it completely out of context, because if he had read the complete comments of Mr Chiarelli he would have seen that if indeed there was a balanced budget, as the government says they will have, a balance in a swap with services and downloading, that would be a different story, which will not happen.

**The Speaker:** Response,. member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm not going to get into whether another former Liberal member may have come down on both sides of an issue. I'll leave that to the members in this House to practise. But I'd like to thank the members for Scarborough North, Ottawa Centre, Lake Nipigon and Northumberland for their comments.

Again, in the two-minute responses, Mr Speaker, you'll hear not a substantive criticism, not one clause that they've drawn attention to. They'll talk about the fact that, yes, I believe in this act, but so does Mel Lastman and so do any number of municipal candidates running in the election this fall.

At the AMO conference we met a considerable number who have told us they've already published their literature, and it says, "No tax increase in 1998," and not just in Toronto, all across this province. That's how much courage they have, that's how much faith they have, and that's how much they take the Premier at his word. There will be no tax increase as a result of the transfer and there will be no tax increase as a result of the City of Toronto Act and the amalgamation. If Mel Lastman is successful, and hopefully one of these days the other mayoral candidates will put on the table what their position is vis-à-vis tax changes, but I can't believe anybody in this great city is going to be elected saying they're going to increase property taxes. It has never happened before, and I don't think people are in a mood to have their pocket picked again. The bottom line is it's probably going to be a competitive race to see who will find the greatest efficiencies, who will find the most productive ways of delivering services, and perhaps even increase the range of services that are available to the people of this great city.

The bottom line in all of this, as with every bill, is we have listened to the people, we have responded in detail. We invite constructive criticism, we invite suggestions on how we can make this process better. But what we don't need are merchants of fear. We don't need nattering nabobs of negativism. We need people who believe the greatest city in the world can be made greater yet.

**2020**

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Curling:** It's quite a privilege and quite an honour to address Bill 148, but the fact is it's also a very sad day in a sense to follow the member for Scarborough East,

who really did not in any way put any new light of any hope that this process is going to be democratic.

I just want to follow up on his last comment, "We have listened and we have been so democratic about our approach." He seemed to forget that early in the session of this megacity process that they were going through, although he's from Scarborough, he did not defend at all the three members of Scarborough council who were locked out and were refused to be listened to by the minister. That's a very democratic government. Three councillors from Scarborough were refused the opportunity to make their presentation to the minister. Then he said he had listened. I hope that while he goes to caucus he reminds his government that this undemocratic process will not be something that people will take kindly to.

One of the main questions that must be asked about this process is whether the people are better off with the direction that this government is going. People don't want these very technical regulations that are put forward; they just want to ask the basic question, "Will I be better off when all this is over?" This government cannot answer that. As a matter of fact, people have come up and many of the opposition have told them they will not be better off; taxes will go up. If you ask people to take on more responsibility in the sense of downloading some of the responsibilities to the municipalities, what are they going to do? They have to find the money from somewhere else, so taxes will be raised.

I want to address one aspect of the downloading that during the federal election people came out very, very strongly about; it was about housing. They talk about the social housing and the way this government handled social housing when they got in. First, they immediately decided they would not proceed with any social housing. They wanted to make sure that their buddies the landlords were in a better position to dictate what they should build and they openly told them they were not building any more social housing because they can't afford it, and I agree with them. If it's going to cost them, why should they build it? Therefore, the government should play a role. But this government immediately ceased to have any social housing built and then asked that most of those responsibilities be pushed on to the municipalities. And they came again, before they did that, and they are bragging about how many people are off welfare. They come into the House every day and say, "We have far less people on welfare."

*Applause.*

**Mr Curling:** They applaud it. The people are here applauding the bully way in which they have pushed the people off welfare by cutting $200 off their income, from $1,000. Then when many of those people came forward and said to them, "How am I going to pay my rent? My rent is $750. Now I'm getting $800," they said they should go and negotiate with the landlord. When they said there was no food on the table for the children, what did they say? They said, "Go and buy dented tins of tuna." As a matter of fact, they went as far as to provide a menu where you could survive. That's the attitude of this government. Now they're going to pass this responsibility on to the municipality and say, "We want one big city," and if there are any taxes that should be going up, it will be the municipality that will be raising the taxes in that process.

I want to talk about Scarborough a little bit, because this is where it hurts a lot. When the megacity process was going through, you will recall that Scarborough decided we would ask the people if it was the way they should go and have a referendum. When the referendum started, this government completely said: "I don't care whatever you do. We will not even listen to what the people say." As you know, people proceeded because they believe in the democratic process, and 70% of the people who voted in that referendum said, "No, we do not want this megacity."

What did the member for Scarborough East say? He doesn't care. It doesn't matter what they say. He was given orders to carry out what Mike Harris, his Premier, and all the whiz kids in the back room tell him to do, and he learned it by heart to a point that he even started believing it himself. But the people of Scarborough East and the people of Scarborough are waiting until the democratic process takes place and they will deal with the member for Scarborough East. I hope he will learn a lesson before that if he wants to represent the people there. They don't believe what you are saying, and they believe that one of these days they will get even with you through the process, because they feel that this government and its bully approach is not what many of us and many of our fathers and grandfathers have fought for, this democratic process which you have so brutalized in that manner.

Last week I was at a function. I was invited to a birthday party for someone in the constituency, Rose Johnson. The Johnson family there, while celebrating the birthday of the wife of one of the fellows, the argument came up about the attitude of this government. When we should have been having a lot of fun, they were completely upset, and these are people who are not very much involved in partisan politics. They expressed so loudly what the polls are saying and what the people are saying, that the way in which you govern must be compassionate and understanding of the issues, not this kind of a bully approach and a pushy approach, without listening to the people. The Johnsons and their guests were so upset with the way this government is behaving; not only they but their friends also expressed their thoughts.

If there is one warning I'm going to give this government, and I'm sure you've been hearing it, it's that somehow the people count, and although you would like the people to be out of the way so you can push your bulldozer through and get through all these bills that you want, it will come back to haunt you one day. As a matter of fact, even their own member, I think from Wentworth North, stated that he didn't want to be a part of a government that lies to the people. That was a strong statement. Those are hurt feelings expressed by a member of their own party, who felt this government is behaving in a manner that has no sensitivity and feeling for the people they govern.

They are so busy getting through their agenda, they are so busy making sure that they can balance the budget, regardless, on the backs of the people and maybe more so on the backs of the poor. They went so hard that the human deficit will be much greater when they are through. I would rather, any day, have a huge financial deficit than have a human deficit, having young people and babies of our country who are hungry and not getting any food, to make sure that we have a country that is compassionate and people who govern compassionately.

The manner in which we are carrying through this megacity bill and downloading is putting a greater burden on the poor of our province. This may not be of concern to you, but as corny as it may sound, the greatest asset we have is people. They can pay off a financial deficit any time, but I'm telling you, you have that human deficit, more who are depending on handouts, as you call them, but those who have no jobs. The unemployment rate of young people is high. The tuition fees are going up higher, 10% more, the second highest in this country. The fact is that those who want access to a greater life are having it more difficult. At the end of the day, they will have to ask themselves: "Am I better off in the direction this government is going? In amassing this great megacity, will I be better off?" The answer is very loud: "No."

**2030**

At the beginning they had said, "If you're going to rush this thing through, could you listen to us to see what the impact will be?" No, they don't want to listen. They will go so far that anyone who comes in their way — they'll change any law so they can make sure they get the will of the day, regardless of the people.

Let me tell this government that the contempt for democracy will come back and haunt you one day. I hope the time is not long in the future when you'll have to respond to the people's needs.

Scarborough is a unique place. It's unique, I presume, because I understand it; and I presume we all represent our own unique community. That community feels that they are in the hands of a government that — with the diversity we have in Scarborough, what we hope is that if there is such a thing as a megacity and they have to have their way, somehow they'll have an input. They would like to see a megacity they can be a part of, and I'm telling you they don't feel that way. In Scarborough they don't feel that they're going to be a part of this megacity the way it's being done.

The member for Scarborough East keeps on mentioning my colleague from Oakwood, saying that he's on the team of Mel Lastman. He believes in the democratic process. In spite of what you think, he has the right to support whomever he wants. He has a right, in any way, to make sure that he's on a team that, when you're ramming that bulldozer through, will make sure you will not continue in that manner.

So I say to the member for Oakwood, God bless you, my man. You support those you want in spite of the bullies we see here. You'll not intimidate any one of us. I'm sure he can speak for himself. You'll not intimidate him one bit.

Even I myself, who will support anyone, I'll not be intimidated by you all. Whether you change the rules, we will make sure that our voices are heard. I continue to say the people should do whatever possible to be heard, whatever it takes, whatever strategy it takes, to make sure that their voices are heard and that the laws that are in place reflect them. If not, they will make sure they can throw you out in the near future.

Let me also quickly speak of those students who are going to school in a couple of weeks, a week or two, entering university, who have found themselves subjected to many of the costs today. They've found they're going to have an increased rent payment. When you're taking away rent control, they'll find themselves again, in the next year, paying a higher cost for rent. Further, they will find themselves paying higher tuition fees. They've found with this government, and with the previous government too, that they have taken away grants but have handed out loans. Many of the students in the next two or three years, and some of them today, are bankrupt before they start their first job. This government, which has done nothing for jobs for young people, nothing whatsoever, comes here one day thinking that we will all believe five ministers getting up and pointing out in different areas how youth unemployment will be better off because each minister has done something.

One of the jobs that surfaced is that they had someone in the office of one of those ministers making phone calls for fund-raising. They say these are summer jobs. Get real. They want real jobs. They want somehow to be a part of the city they can contribute to.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** Speak to the bill.

**Mr Curling:** The member for Scarborough — where are you from?

**Mr Newman:** You don't even know.

**Mr Curling:** What part of Scarborough? Mr Newman from Scarborough — I can't recall the specific area itself — said, "Speak on the bill."

**Mr Patten:** Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Curling:** Scarborough Centre.

I'm speaking directly for people that it affects. You may talk about all the fancy regulations and all that; I'm speaking about where it matters most to people, not about section so-and-so or section this. They want to know what section of this law they're a part of. They want to know if they're better off if you form this great megacity, for you think that bigger is better. They don't see this.

You don't answer any questions. You do not allow any consultation. You ram things through and then try to compare, somehow, who was given more hearings than the other. I would love to see a minister who is here regularly, a minister who will listen to all the people and say, "I have listened carefully." I think what happened is that you have heard but you haven't listened. You call them special interest groups, and there's a vast difference with those

who feel that the people have no right to come before you, the people you were elected for.

How strange it is that during election time, as we knock on doors, how patiently we will stand and listen to the concerns of people, how patiently and how well we will document in books what we will do, and then say, "Vote for me, because the laws I will make and the city I will create are a part of you." How quickly we forget that the laws you make and the city you create. People are saying to them: "I have no time to contribute in consultation. You give me no time to do that." They are somehow feeling left out.

But I want to say again that democracy is one of the best systems. It may not be the greatest, but I don't know of any other that is better. But there is a time for accountability, and that day when you all start knocking at the doors they will say, "We did not feel a part of that megacity which you created, and the responsibility that you gave to the cities too without any kind of financing. The taxes that went up are costing me more to be in my house, to pay my taxes for my house, more for my schools," They'll be saying, "We are not a part of this city. We are not a part of this government," and they'll make sure you are accountable at that time, because the power then lies within the people to say — you may want to listen carefully-when they go back to the polls, "The manner in which you treated us in a bullying way, without any sensitivity or compassion whatsoever," they will feel that now is the time for them to speak.

At that time the pen will speak louder than your bulldozer. The pen and the vote will be much louder than the arrogance you have set up in this place. When that election day comes, all that arrogance and all the bullying will come home to roost that day, and then you will be a bit too late. It'll be too late.

I recall your cousin Mulroney who at the time said in his arrogance — and even when he left the field of politics. They know the party that you represent and the group of people who behaved in such a bullying way that they cleaned them all out. No one would ever believe that one of the largest caucuses that ever sat as a government in Canada could meet in a telephone booth and have room. They were completely wiped out, because the pen and democracy spoke louder that time than all the bulldozers.

I find and people are saying they find you much more arrogant than Mulroney, much more arrogant than that federal government, the Conservatives of that time. How things have changed. When you were on the opposition side, you said: "Give me a chance. I will not increase taxes. I will treat everyone fairly." But as soon as you got in, you made sure that those who needed you most, the most vulnerable, were attacked instantly. They were attacked immediately. Those who had no access to jobs and who were being denied, and the visible minorities were then put aside with the employment equity and you said, "Out with that."

I say to you, my friends, that unless you have a bill and legislation to reflect the people, they will vote against all what you say.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**2040**

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I'm pleased and proud to respond to the comments made by the member for Scarborough North. I recall his conduct here in this House during the course of Bill 26. People rallied around him here in the Legislature as the member, with courage and tenacity and some significant amount of endurance, facilitated the slowing down of the process around Bill 26 in such a way that public attention could be focused on it. Bill 148 is being referred to as the Son of Megacity. In fact, megacity and Bill 148 following it indeed all flow from Bill 26. Bill 26 was this government's cornerstone, the block they laid upon which they've been expanding ever since.

My colleague from Scarborough North speaks generously about democracy, but I say to him that we may be witnessing an erosion of democracy here in this province and in this Legislature as this government uses its majority — I acknowledge it's a majority — with total disdain for the important role of the opposition parties, with total disdain, quite frankly, for the people, the working people, the retirees, the students, the unemployed, the women and the children of this province, the sick, the ill, disdain for those people as it rams through rule changes to restrict and limit debate so the public won't have access to the important impositions that this government, with its heavy-handed tactics, is imposing upon the people of Ontario very much against their will.

I'm proud of opposition members. We'll continue to struggle against a tyrannical government.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** The comments of the member for Scarborough North are predictable, especially predictable for those of us who recall that when you were Minister of Housing, you were part of the David Peterson cabinet that voted in one year for 33 tax increases. You can't come in here and talk about government responsibility.

"Bullying" is the most incredible expression for a former Liberal cabinet minister to use. The provincial debt in this province took 118 years to reach $25 billion. After five years of being in office, you left and the provincial debt was $48 billion. So don't talk to us about going back to the polls.

I assure you, I am really looking forward to going back to the polls. I know what is not going to happen is what happened to your government. Your government, as I remember, to the member for Scarborough North, had 94 members. What did you have after the election? Thirty-six. When you talk about being wiped out at the polls, the people of this province understand very clearly what a Liberal government is about. They understand the tax-and-spend policies of the Liberals in this province. To repeat that history for you would be a reach.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'm pleased to offer my comments to my colleague from Scarborough North. We in the opposition certainly understand and agree when he talks about people in politics and the ramifications of bad policies on people. If we only understood, as the

member for Scarborough North understands, that people and politics are synonymous and that the effects of our legislation, whether good or bad, have a corresponding effect on the people we represent.

That's why we only wish that the government had listened to the six weeks of public hearings that were forced upon them by members of the opposition. Expert after expert said megacity is the wrong way to go. Let's talk about a few experts and let's hear what they had to say, since the member across the way likes to quote experts.

Wendell Cox, an international public policy consultant, said, "This just makes no sense at all. I think in the long run megacity is going to be a failed experiment." Jane Jacobs said that amalgamation is "the most stupid idea" she's ever heard. But the most telling quote comes from Mike Harris in 1994, when he said:

"There is no cost for a municipality to maintain its name and identity. Why destroy our roots and our pride? I disagree with restructuring because it believes that bigger is better. Services always cost more in larger communities." Mike Harris, the Premier of Ontario, your leader, said that.

**Mr Silipo:** I'm glad to be able to say, briefly, congratulations to the member for Scarborough North for his comments on Bill 148. Granted, it was not exactly a clause-by-clause analysis of the bill —

*Laughter.*

**Mr Silipo:** Seriously, I believe the message he put forward was one of linking what is in Bill 148 to the other issues that we have all been talking about and that we know are very much in front of this government.

If the member for Mississauga South is correct in her analysis about the pattern that develops around here, we can look forward to a Tory caucus coming back after the next election of perhaps 27 members, and that's before factoring in the reduced number of members, so even fewer than that. That would probably be one of the better things that could happen for the future of the province.

As the member for Scarborough North has pointed out, this government seems to be forgetting, whether through Bill 148 or any of the other measures they have chosen themselves but now they want to blame us for, put together under the whole umbrella of disentanglement, which we have soon enough discovered to be simply pushing down to the property tax base many of the costs of many important services, that in this process people are getting hurt. In this process the most vulnerable among our citizens are losing not just important services but vital services, in some cases. They are finding, where they can still afford to pay, that they're going to have to pay even more for the services that will remain after this government's actions are completed. That's what was most clear to me listening to the member for Scarborough North.

**The Speaker:** Response, member for Scarborough North.

**Mr Curling:** Let me thank the members who contributed and responded: the member for Welland-Thorold, the member for Mississauga South, the member for Dovercourt, and also my good friend the member for Sudbury.

I heard the member for Mississauga South talk about what we had done in our time as government. Let me remind her that in over 30 years no other government had a balanced budget. In 1989 —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock, please. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Come to order, please. It's not preferential anything. If you want me to explain the ruling today, I will. Sometimes, if the opposition members are out of order, I let the clock run. This isn't a very difficult concept, either. When the government members are out of order, I stop the clock. It's quite simple.

The member was standing in his place making a statement and the third party and the government members were heckling beyond reasonable expectations. I stopped the clock.

I'm not in for a dialogue. I would expect most members could understand that. Member for Scarborough North.

**2050**

**Mr Curling:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

In 1989 we balanced the budget, even though we found that we had inherited an accumulation of debt from the previous government. We must recall that the Tory government was in power for 42 years, and we arrived at a government that was almost bankrupt. If we had to increase taxes, as they say, it paid down many of those debts we owed.

While members may feel that we should be doing clause-by-clause, let me tell you, every clause in there affects individuals in our society. We must remind ourselves that as we make laws, we must remember that people are a part of that. Sometimes we forget, forget very basically that this is what's important. Therefore, I am saying there is time enough for you to make sure the people are listened to and that the laws reflect what the people desire.

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wondered whether now, to implement your new ruling about where the outbursts come from and their volume —

**The Speaker:** It's not a new ruling, by the way.

**Mrs Marland:** You just said "my ruling this afternoon."

**The Speaker:** It wasn't new; it just happened to be a ruling.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. I'm simply asking you whether you are now going to implement a noise meter so that it's fair. Certainly when they had the outbursts when I was speaking, you didn't stop the clock.

**The Speaker:** With the greatest respect, there is a noise meter. I'm surprised you didn't know that.

Further debate?

**Interjection:** What have you done, Marilyn?

**Ms Churley:** Yes, what have I done?

I think the members of the House, especially the Tory party and my own party, will forgive me if I begin my speech by commenting on the balanced budget that the Liberals left in 1990. The clock had barely started to tick — tick-tock, tick-tock — $1 billion, $2 billion, $3 billion,

and barely 10 minutes had gone by. There was no balanced budget in 1990.

First of all, I want to assure people who are watching out there tonight that this not a rerun. This is the real me in real time, believe it or not. If you thought Queen's Park was crazy before, it's really crazy now. Mr Speaker, as you know, the Harris government has outdone God now. At Queen's Park now we have two days in one. Yes, folks, we're into day two here at the Legislature, on Tuesday, August 26. Day one ended at 6 o'clock; day two started at 6:30. Go figure, but that's the reality here now.

We are debating Bill 148, which I don't think is necessary to go through clause by clause. It's a pretty simple bill, really, this son of the mega-monster that the government recently created. I will tell you briefly what it does.

It transfers a variety of powers and responsibilities held by our beloved old cities to the new monster city as of January 1, 1998. It also amalgamates various local boards like library boards, boards of health and historical boards. Boards not specifically named in the bill continue unless the monster council decides to combine them. The TTC is continued as a distinct entity and its monopoly power is confirmed. Municipal electric utilities were specifically amalgamated in Bill 103 itself, the megacity bill. This bill, for January 1, jams everything together so that somehow this new monster city will be able to manage the new reality.

I can tell you there's probably a lot of stuff left out of this bill, but I want to tell you a little bit about the implications of this. We know that today — just today, by coincidence — the Metro reference library has been shut down because of cutbacks already from this government, and this is before the new megacity goes through. I'm worried about the libraries in my community. I have a number of low-income people in my riding who use the parks for free now. The latest thing we're hearing is that, after the amalgamation, the poor kids in my riding are going to have to pay to go swimming, pay for their recreation.

A little earlier the member for Scarborough East was preaching, Mr Know-It-All, telling us that we were all wrong and didn't know what we were talking about. I would say there is a lot of self-delusion going on over there. The members for Scarborough East, Northumberland and Nepean, I believe — I don't know if the member for Nepean said this or not — were saying they were at the AMO conference.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** I said perhaps the member for Nepean wasn't there. They were quoting earlier and telling us about the wonderful, magnificent things the municipal councillors were telling them. I guess it's all the media's fault; the media must be misrepresenting what our AMO friends were saying today.

I'm going to quote, just because they are having some delusions over there, what some of their members have said recently, even though they stand up and say: "All is well. This is a great bill. Bill 103 was a great bill. Every single thing we've done is for the good of the people of Ontario and it's all great. Why are you so full of doom and gloom over there?"

On August 19 there were a couple of scrums of Tory members as they were coming back into caucus after a break. This is what the member from Hamilton-Wentworth said:

"We're getting feedback that perhaps we are moving too quickly. Many of us don't really have a whole lot of say in what's going on so I think that's causing concerns in many of the caucus members. On the download scenario, it concerns me that we still don't have definitive numbers, I understand not coming until October. We're talking a multibillion dollar initiative, so I'm a little concerned that we're pressing ahead without numbers. A business wouldn't do that. A lot of caucus members are concerned."

Then a little later, "What do you foresee in 1999, the next election?" was the question. The member for Hamilton-Wentworth replied, although it says "TS" here in the transcript, to be accurate:

"It's obvious we're on the downward slide, and there's a point, I think, once you get so far down you can never come back. When you get everybody mad at you, it's hard to make peace with everyone, to combat police, firefighters and so forth. They're all very angry at us. Obviously, if you make everybody mad at you, there's nobody there to support you. Even my mom has said sometimes that she..." and the quote ends there.

A little later, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Mr Morley Kells, was interviewed. He said, "The negatives are much greater right now in the equation than the pluses. The pluses are really only the tax break and the economy, so many people see more negative."

Later on, Bill Murdoch, the member for Grey-Owen Sound, said:

"I'm more concerned about the Who Does What and the transfer payments to municipalities. I attended a meeting in London with my counties and the wardens, and they're quite concerned that the figures aren't coming out the way they're supposed to come out. I have some grave concerns about that. I will be meeting with a few of Mr Harris's people to talk to them about this, and they have to have some answers for me. That's my biggest problem right now, this transfer payment, the Who Does What and the stuff like that. If municipal taxes go up this fall, we're in trouble, and if we have municipal politicians out there running an anti-Harris campaign to get elected, we're in real trouble because that will spin off on to us."

**2100**

The statements that some of the members opposite from the government side were making tonight indicate once again that not only are they not listening to the people of Ontario, but they are not listening to their own caucus members, who have great concerns and are expressing what their constituents are telling them. They're not just making this up. They're worried because we all just spent time in our constituencies and those members are hearing the same thing our members are hearing in our communities.

Mind you, the Riverdale constituency did not vote for the Tories in the first place and they have been mostly against the majority of this government's agenda from day one, and I congratulate them on that. They listened, they heard what was being said and the majority of people in Riverdale knew, could see the writing on the wall, and unfortunately — I say "unfortunately," because there's not a whole lot of enjoyment in "I told you so" in this — a lot of people are getting hurt.

We had a debate on the megacity bill, Bill 103; 76.3% I believe voted against. There was even a higher number in East York where it was over 80%; I think it was 83%. The average number of people in Toronto who voted against that bill was 76.3%. The government likes to crow about the fact that they listened, they consulted, people came, all these thousands of hours, which they wouldn't have done if the opposition hadn't forced them to. I think they've forgotten that.

But then they didn't pay any attention to what people said. The majority of people said, "No, we don't like this plan." The majority of people said, "Not one credible study." In fact the government had to go out and find somebody to do a bogus study for them because nobody agreed with this plan. Everybody said that this is not solving the problem, but did the government listen? No. So the government now continues to be arrogant and to move ahead. Now what we have before us is a bill called Bill 148, An Act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new City of Toronto.

When the member for Scarborough East was up speaking earlier, he tried to be the voice of reason for a moment. He said, "If anybody has something reasonable to propose, we're willing to make changes." Unfortunately, the government itself has belied that by not supporting the private member's bill, Bill 144, from my colleague from Beaches-Woodbine. It's a very reasonable, sensible bill. Nobody could argue with it. In fact your House leader and member for Don Mills has said — I don't think he said it's unreasonable — "Let's just wait until the new councils are in place and let them deal with it." That means the people of East York are going to start off with under-representation in this new megacity. They only get two councillors and what this bill very simply asks for is to up that number to three.

The member for Scarborough East said tonight: "Oh, well, it's too late now. The people who are running have printed their literature. We can't do it now. It would just mess everything up." I would suggest to the member for Scarborough East that he go and chat with the people who are running for office in East York. I believe every one of them would tell him: "It's not a problem. Don't let that stop you. If that's the reason you're not supporting this private member's bill or you won't make an amendment yourself, hey, no problem, we can deal with that."

That is just an excuse to not act on it, because I believe even the member for Scarborough East understands that this is a fair and reasonable suggestion.

I want to engage in this discussion a little bit because it's very important. It is one small suggestion that the opposition is making to help this situation a little bit, and the people of East York want it to happen.

**Mr Baird:** It doesn't have anything to do with redistribution, does it, Marilyn?

**Ms Churley:** Not at all, member for Nepean. In fact, I'll tell you what it's about. The situation now is they have been allotted only two councillors and what we're asking and what the people of East York want is to have three. The current act would provide a lower councillor-to-resident ratio in East York ward at 1 to 54,000 compared to 1 to 38,000 on average across Metro.

When I spoke about this before, I asked the Deputy Premier if he'd support it. I know the member for Beaches-Woodbine has asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs and I don't know who else, but every time the answer is — nobody says there's a problem with this — "Just leave it. Let the new megacity council deal with it."

I don't expect a lot from this government. I don't expect that very many amendments or private members' bills will be accepted by the government, but I do expect, as the member for Scarborough East said tonight, that if there are reasonable amendments and suggestions from the public and from the opposition, they would listen. This is a reasonable request. It cannot hurt the government in any way. The members in East York who are running would be delighted. I'm sure some of them would have some personal reasons they'd be delighted. There's a chance for three people to win instead of two. Be that as it may, I'm sure they wouldn't object.

Hopefully, this bill will go out to committee. I understand that hasn't been decided yet, but I believe that is a real possibility and I certainly hope it does, because I believe it's not just, as some members say, a technical document. There are real implications to this bill; for instance, the pooling of moneys. Some of the money that's being pooled, like the Toronto Parking Authority, is valued at $150 million. That's far above what anybody else — I believe the only other parking agency in Metro is run by North York. What's now going to happen to that money when it's pooled? There are a lot of implications here. There are serious implications. I was for a short time a councillor at Toronto city council.

**Mr Pouliot:** And a good one.

**Ms Churley:** My colleague from Lake Nipigon says, "And a good one." I know I tried hard to represent my community and I learned a little bit about how communities work. Going from small communities, tailoring its needs to that community and being able to hear the community is gone and we're going to have one, big megaboard for practically everything.

What's that going to do to local concerns around public health? What's that going to do to all of the environment? I know the city of Toronto. I ran politically as an environmentalist and brought a number of environmental issues in my riding and throughout the city of Toronto to city council, and I got a lot of support from all segments of the city council, from the right to the left to those in the middle, because there was a strong sense in the city of Toronto that we wanted environmental protection. We have some

very good public health programs in the city of Toronto which are not duplicated in other municipalities. So this is not just a technical bill. There are real concerns here.

The other thing I would say is that the government must hear from people because they make mistakes, as we have seen with Bill 26 and numerous other bills, when they rush them through so quickly. People can and do give good suggestions. I hold the member for Scarborough East to his word tonight, that if people make good suggestions that can help and would make a difference, if people can show that certain aspects of this bill will bring undue harm to their community, the government will listen and will make amendments. I think that's where we're at now with this bill. It's silly for me or any of the members of the opposition to get up and expect that you're going to make a lot of changes. We don't believe you are. But I have one suggestion tonight which I will repeat again, and that is the private member's bill, or, if you don't want the member for Beaches-Woodbine's private member's bill to go through, find a way to make an amendment yourself.

**2110**

Work with the opposition parties if there are fears about opening up a bill because there might be some new filibuster or stalling or trying to get other amendments through. I think you would find that the opposition would be willing to work with you to get this amendment through, because it's very important to the people of East York. I think what happened here is that a mistake was made. I honestly think a mistake was made. If you look at the situation in East York and what's happened to them, it is a mistake, and it is not fair to the community to leave it that way. You have the power to fix it, and I really don't think that is a lot to ask.

I will end tonight in saying that I don't support this bill because I don't support Bill 103, the megacity bill. I think it's a huge mistake. I think you're creating a monster. You're destroying our communities as we know them.

I'm asking for two things tonight: first, that there be hearings, proper hearings, so people can become involved, people can take a look at the bill and offer suggestions, and the government will pay attention to those; second, I would ask the government members to take a look at the East York situation, because it is something that you can do, a small thing that could make a huge difference to the city of East York when it's amalgamated.

If any of the members would like to find out more about the situation in East York, there is the member for East York, as you know, who sits in your caucus, and the member for Don Mills. I'm not allowed to comment on whether or not he's here tonight. But I would ask all the government members to seriously take a look at that and see if there's anything you can do to help East York and the opposition find a way we can all work together to get that through.

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Galt:** It's interesting to hear the presentation from the member for Riverdale. Consistent with a lot of the other speakers in the opposition, she really didn't refer very much to the bill. I do have to respect the one amendment that she is putting forward, at least the suggestion of an amendment, in connection with East York and representation there, but certainly there are very few constructive thoughts and ideas coming out in this.

I did hear her say it's a very simple bill. Therefore I would take from that that it's a clear bill, an understandable bill clarifying ownership of various facilities in the city such as town halls, rinks, tennis courts and that kind of thing; also the understanding and clarification of the operation of the city in the future. I would almost think she would want to support a bill such as that when it's as clear as she's making reference to.

She did make reference to both the member for Scarborough East and myself being at the AMO conference and some of the good information and good feedback we're getting. It's kind of disappointing, I suppose, when you enjoy hearing the doom and gloom rather than the good feedback that we're getting. Certainly what I'm hearing from constituents regularly in my riding is: "Hold the line; stick to it. Make sure you come through with what you were committed to and what you promised to do."

It's interesting. What we are doing is really what the previous government started out to do under the wording and heading of "disentanglement." They went out for some time and consulted, they studied, they looked at, but they failed to act. That's one difference between the previous government and this one. This government is ready to act. We are moving ahead; we are doing things. It may be just a little embarrassing for you after you looked at it and cowered out or chickened out for whatever reason. We are going ahead. We've studied it, we've looked at it, we've consulted, we know it's right, and we are moving ahead.

**Mr Sergio:** I am pleased to add to the comments of the member for Riverdale. As usual, she has given an excellent presentation on the content of Bill 148, including the original Bill 103.

What the member was saying was that during the course of the hearings — I think we had six weeks in total of hearings — the government has been listening, but they have not been acting. What the people have been saying — and this is what the member has been repeating — is that they had a serious concern with respect to tax increases, with respect to the cuts in services and putting further away the representation from the local people. The people have been saying that they want to have input into how this new megacity is going to work. Throughout the six weeks of hearings, we have had professional people, we have had common people, individuals, ratepayers' groups, and they all said unanimously: "We can't support it. It's not going to work." And the government wouldn't listen.

Now the government is imposing its own views, even though we the opposition and even though the people continue to say, "The way you're going about it, the way you're going to present this bill, it is not going to work."

Even today we still have hospital boards and we have municipalities that have been appealing the decision of the

government, and the government wants to push ahead because they have their own agenda. During the course of the hearings, we have had meetings throughout churches, community halls, banquet halls, meeting places, meeting rooms, living rooms, basement places, and the people have said: "We don't want it. We want to have a say. Please listen to us." Evidently the government is not listening.

**Mr Pouliot:** I too would wish to congratulate the member for Riverdale: a commanding performance indeed, a great deal of knowledge, a sensitivity, some wisdom, trying to convey as a last effort to the majority opposite that there are other ways to do things, reminding them that since the tabling of Bill 103, it's been an amazing ride indeed. And it's not over.

You have to pay the piper on the revenue side, taxation revenue, personal income tax, $16 billion per annum 1996-97. It's already projected to go down by $1.9 billion, almost $2 billion. What you do is you have this ill-fated attempt to recuperate money. The shortfall has to be made up. So you introduce Bill 103, and then you have the offspring, the children of Bill 103: today Bill 148, and in a few days following, no doubt, Bill 149 and on and on, because you must download, you must pass the responsibility for services to municipalities.

If amalgamation doesn't get you, assessment will. Most people across the province say, "My property taxes will go up." Clerk-treasurers, reeves, mayors say, "Expect your property taxes to go up." This is not revenue-neutral. Let's make no mistake about it. This exercise borders on hypocrisy. It's veiled. They have this belief that it is honestly dishonest. There is no honesty; it is simply dishonest. It represents what is the worst about government.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member for Riverdale. I appreciate her comments and her commentary in all of this. But again, we're now pushing four hours of input from the opposition members and not a single clause, not a single word of this bill, have they found any substantive reason to criticize. They have done a very good job in suggesting to you that they own a crystal ball, that they know what the future of this province is. Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect, I suggest you don't take any financial or investment advice from those people, because if they were that prescient, they'd be the richest people in Ontario.

I will restrict my comments to the facts. The member has speculated about things such as tax increases. Let's look back at last year, where even after assimilating the first 15% of the income tax cut, personal income tax revenue in the province of Ontario went up $670 million. How can that be? It doesn't follow your socialist model that big government is the only way to deliver things. No, it follows the model of 53 other jurisdictions in this world that have cut marginal tax rates, and in every case revenues went up. You folks, the two of you, raised taxes 65 times but your revenue went down. It went down.

**2120**

You'll forgive us if we're going to rely on facts. You can continue to have a debate, you can continue to attempt to depress the people of this province with rhetoric and ill-considered futurism, but the bottom line is that this bill is an important step forward. It's part of our initiative to make Ontario more productive, more efficient, give the tools they need to the municipalities, and our great city of Toronto will become even greater. I hope the member becomes part of that debate.

**The Speaker:** Response, the member for Riverdale.

**Ms Churley:** Thank you to the members for Northumberland, Yorkview, Lake Nipigon and especially Scarborough East, although the members for Scarborough East and Northumberland were entirely predictable. I could have written what they said for them. In fact, I think they have a standard speech now that they use after every member speaks. They don't listen to what the members have to say. Their two-minutes responses are written for them. They sit and chat, go in and out and do whatever they want to do and then get up and give the same speech over and over again. Frankly, it's starting to get quite boring.

To hear this kind of nonsense from a government that has put user fees on drugs for seniors, where tuition fees have gone way up and everybody knows user fees — people aren't even aware yet of the hundreds and hundreds of new user fees that are out there. This is a government that is promising a 30% tax cut. On one hand they're putting little bits of money — the poorer you are, the less you get — in this pocket, and from the other pocket taking more out.

This is the government, these are the people: The members for Northumberland and Scarborough East get up and rail about our tax increases. They sit there smugly and talk about all the great things they're doing for Ontario. I want to point out particularly to the member for Northumberland, because it's clear neither of them listens, that I spoke about the contents of this bill. When I said it was simple, I made it clear that the simplicity is in what it's trying to do. But it is not just a technical bill. It has real implications. I made a really useful suggestion tonight about East York which I hope they —

**Mr Gilchrist:** It's not in this bill.

**Ms Churley:** I hope you will support the private member's bill from my colleague from the Beaches.

**The Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr Newman:** I'm pleased to be able to join the debate tonight on Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act (No. 2). In preparing for my debate this evening, I reviewed Hansard and saw that almost five hours of opposition debate has been allotted. When you look through it, not a single reference was made to the bill we're debating tonight.

**Ms Churley:** That's not true. You too. Who wrote your speech?

**Mr Newman:** The opposition, especially the Liberals, seem to have the same speech —

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Scarborough Centre, could you come to order just for a moment. Member for Riverdale, I think you know that's unparliamentary.

**Mrs Marland:** Are you stopping the clock?

**The Speaker:** Yes. Can you stop the clock for me. You must withdraw that.

**Ms Churley:** Speaker, it was in a heated moment and I honestly can't remember what I said.

**The Speaker:** That the member was not telling the truth.

**Ms Churley:** I apologize for that; I withdraw it.

**Mr Newman:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The opposition, especially the Liberals, seem to have the same speech regardless of the bill, and in over two years of sitting here in this place I have a saying now: "Same speech, different bill." That's all we hear from the opposition. Unlike the opposition, I will speak to Bill 148.

The City of Toronto Act, 1997, became law in April of this year. It provided the basic legislative framework to establish the new municipal corporation and was intended to indicate the overall direction of our government and to allow the municipal elections in November to go ahead on schedule. I am proud that our government has achieved that.

This is the second city of Toronto bill and it's no surprise to anyone. I quote Minister Leach in his press release of June 26, 1997,which states, "This legislation is necessary, from an administrative and technical point of view, to ensure that the new city council has the authority to continue to carry out routine duties when the new city comes into being on January 1, 1998." He goes on: "People have to know that the day before and the day after the new city comes into effect, the day-to-day services will stay the same. We're simply providing for an orderly transition to one unified city." I say, how can the opposition be against that?

Our government has said from the outset of the debate on the first bill that we would introduce a second bill to deal with the administrative, technical and specific transitional matters surrounding the amalgamation process. This bill is about protecting services for the people of Metro Toronto, services they currently enjoy, expect and depend on.

What would happen to my constituent in Scarborough Centre who had to take the TTC to work on January 2, 1998, if this was not included in the bill? I ask the question, would the TTC continue to operate?

What about those 157,000 people in Ontario who have jobs today, many of them in Metropolitan Toronto, who rely upon the TTC to get to and from work? What would happen to these people who have found that new work?

This bill ensures that services currently available to all residents will continue to be available during the transition period. This bill is not about new powers. It is about a continuation of powers currently afforded to Metro council and the six cities and the borough of East York. This bill is a necessary step. It is for the most part a housekeeping bill that needs to be passed quickly to protect the residents of Metro Toronto.

I say to the members opposite, stop stalling, stop playing political games, stop looking for media hits and let's get on with passing this bill so that my constituents in Scarborough Centre can feel secure, as they should, that their —

**Mr Sergio:** On a point of order, Speaker: I hate to interrupt the member, but can we have a check on the quorum, please?

**The Speaker:** Quorum?

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**Mr Baird:** On a point of order, Speaker: I think the public at home should know there's only one member of the Liberal Party here and that's why there wasn't a quorum.

**The Speaker:** That's not a point of order.

**Mr Sergio:** On a point of order, Speaker: If you would explain the rules of this House to the member who's just accused the Liberal side, I would appreciate it.

**The Speaker:** Member for Nepean, if you would like to withdraw that, it's completely up to you.

**Mr Baird:** Mr Speaker, I would like to withdraw from the record the fact I mentioned earlier, that there was only one Liberal member here.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Sergio:** On a point of order, Speaker: It seems that the government members enjoyed it so much that they have changed the rules. Now with the rules diminished they can't maintain the quorum in the House and it's up to them to maintain the quorum in the House. If they have changed the rules, they've got to abide by the rules.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Newman:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's great to get back to my speech. My constituents in Scarborough Centre really want to hear what I have to say on Bill 148. I detest the tactics of the opposition member for Yorkview in preventing me from doing that. If you think I'm going to stop talking about Bill 148, you're absolutely wrong. I'm going to pick up again when we resume the debate on Bill 148. In recognition of the time, it being 9:30 of the clock, Mr Speaker —

**The Speaker:** It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

## Tuesday 26 August 1997

### SECOND READINGS

**City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2)**
Bill 148, *Mr Leach*
Ms Lankin ..... 11523
Mr Silipo ..... 11526, 11533, 11541
Mr Galt ..... 11532, 11537, 11544
Mr Sergio ..... 11532, 11544
Ms Churley ..... 11532, 11541, 11545
Mr Tilson ..... 11532
Mr Gilchrist ..... 11533, 11537, 11545
Mr Curling ..... 11536, 11537, 11541
Mr Pouliot ..... 11536, 11545
Mr Patten ..... 11537
Mr Kormos ..... 11540
Mrs Marland ..... 11540
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11540
Mr Newman ..... 11545
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11546

# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mardi 26 août 1997

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto (nº 2),** projet de loi 148,
*M. Leach*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11546

CA2 ON
X1
-D23

Government
Publications

No. 220A

Nº 220A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Wednesday 27 August 1997**

**Mercredi 27 août 1997**

LIBRARY
SEP 3 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 août 1997

*The House met at 1334.*
*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I was alarmed to learn earlier this week that the Ontario student assistance program office in Thunder Bay is closing the doors at the end of this month to all walk-in inquiries. This decision means that from now on the only access students in Thunder Bay will have to this system is through the telephone — read "voice mail" — or the ministry's Web site.

All members of this House have decried the government continuing to distance itself from the people it is meant to serve, and what is becoming more clear is that government cuts to all of its services are relegating the people of this province to a voice mail world that is frustrating, costly in terms of people's time and just plain wrong.

While the latest move is enormously frustrating to all of those who have used the personal services of this office in the past, it only adds to the shock that students all across Ontario experienced when they recently learned that ownership or leasing of a vehicle is now to be assessed as part of a student's income, effectively cutting off access to OSAP for many needy students.

The dreams of many young people are being dashed by this government's hard-hearted approach. As Lisa Jostiak, a constituent of mine whose last term of academic studies is threatened by this new assessment requirement, put it: "I am not asking the government to give me money for my tuition. I simply want to borrow it, teach, and repay my debt with gratitude."

Minister, please change this decision so that thousands of students across the province are not denied access to the education they need and deserve.

### CASINOS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Last night in my community a group titled Residents Against Gambling Expansion held a public meeting. It was very informative. They invited guests from other communities. There was Mr Don French from Barrie, who is part of Citizens Against Gambling Expansion Ontario, and Nancy Langille from Belleville, who has been spearheading the organizing drive in that community to get their local municipality to reject the imposition of many gaming clubs on that community. Person after person from my community who got to the mike said that the Mike Harris government should stop forcing these casinos on communities.

We saw the economic impacts, the social impacts; experts provided us with information about what it would mean in our own economy. In my own local community, this new gaming club that the Harris government is forcing into the Beaches is likely to take $25 million out of that neighbourhood economy. The local retailers, the local businesses, the local service clubs, all of them recognize that this is a huge threat to the integrity of the community, the economy of the community and the social fabric of the community.

I beg the government to stand back and to look, like they're doing with commercial casinos, at the option of letting communities decide for themselves. Hold a referendum. Communities can make that decision.

### PROJECT TURNAROUND

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** I'm pleased to draw attention to the fact that former Camp Hillsdale in my riding has a new life. Constituents in the riding of Simcoe East enjoyed employment and services from Camp Hillsdale until the former government, in what I consider blind wisdom, closed the minimum security facility, leaving productive land and jobs to welfare, waste and weeds.

Tomorrow morning I will accompany the Solicitor General at the official opening of Project Turnaround, a young offenders strict discipline facility designed to reduce the rate of repeat offenders.

This government is fulfilling an election promise. We promised to get tough with young offenders. Project Turnaround will do just that. Young offenders will spend their time at Camp Hillsdale in a highly structured 16-hour day developing life skills, literacy skills and problem-solving techniques with an emphasis on teamwork.

For the community, reopening this facility should mean 97 acres of farm land will again be productive and jobs are available for approximately 40 people. It is my hope that the operators will take full advantage of the agricultural opportunities at this site.

Ontarians called for tougher sanctions against youth crime, and Project Turnaround in Oro-Medonte is answering the call. The community has raised the issue with regard to security which I had, and I believe that the necessary steps have been taken to alleviate all those concerns.

**1340**

## FERRY SERVICE

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** The ferry service between Tobermory and South Baymouth is an important transportation link for the people of Ontario. The ferry service transports tens of thousands of people in vehicles every year, saving thousands of hours, thousands of litres of gasoline and considerable traffic on our overburdened north-south highways.

It was improved in 1974 with the addition of a new ship, the M.S. Chi-Cheemaun, replacing two smaller, slower, aging ships. In 1988 the service was further upgraded with the purchase of the Nindawayma. The additional ship added valuable sailings, eliminated most waits and added both considerable revenue and, most important, reliability to the service. If the Chi-Cheemaun was disabled, the Nindawayma was able to provide and maintain adequate service while necessary repairs were made.

Since 1992 the Nindawayma has been ingloriously tied up in Owen Sound, unable to build traffic between Tobermory and South Baymouth and unable to provide backup in case of failure of the Chi-Cheemaun. On two separate occasions this summer, the Chi-Cheemaun experienced difficulties, causing grave inconvenience to the travelling public and costing the local tourist economy untold thousands of dollars. Last year the Chi-Cheemaun was taken out of service before the season ended for mechanical reasons.

Clearly the Minister of Northern Development cares little about this service. He should commit to putting the Nindawayma back in service for the 1998 season and assure the travelling public and the employees and business owners of the Bruce Peninsula and Manitoulin of a reliable service so necessary for a growing economy.

## METROPOLITAN TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** This week we saw here in Metropolitan Toronto yet another example of the impact of the Mike Harris cuts. The Metro reference library, a public institution which has served not just Metropolitan Toronto but the whole province well for many years, has had to shut its doors for a period of time to deal with the cuts to its budget.

While I don't expect the government to do anything to ameliorate that situation, there is one area with respect to the Metro reference library where the government can act to render some justice and to make the running of the facility a little bit easier; that is, through Bill 148, to do what even some of its government members seem to be inclined to support, and that is to maintain the unique governance structure that this institution has.

That would help at least in ensuring that there is attention paid to the needs of this particular body, a reference library that serves, as the last survey showed, people from across the province, but by and large people who are students, people who are small business, a group, by the way, which certainly this government purports to want to support; a reference library which is in fact well known throughout the province and which needs to continue to have its own governance structure rather than be amalgamated into the other public library board that is going to be created under the new city. I hope that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Culture will at least come to their senses in allowing for the governance structure that exists now to continue even into January 1 of next year.

## FRANK MCKECHNIE

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** It is with the greatest respect and deepest admiration that I stand in this Legislature today to pay tribute to Mississauga city councillor Frank McKechnie, who died last Friday, August 22.

Frank's legacy for us all is that we will always think of him as an exemplary role model for the true meaning of community service. Throughout his record 39 years as a municipal councillor, he never changed his commitment to the people he served. He was as concerned for the little person nobody knew he was helping as he was for the president of a large corporation.

Naturally, Frank McKechnie retained his pride in his Scottish heritage as he also worked with strong allegiance for his new homeland of Canada. It was this feeling of loyalty that encouraged Frank and me to design a coat of arms for the city of Mississauga and to present it as our gift to the city. The motto on the coat of arms is "Pride in our Past, Faith in our Future." Frank lived these words in his daily life. He was always optimistic and positive in his approach to life and exuded this outlook to us all with his always cheerful smile and warm greeting.

Known as the mayor of Malton, he worked tirelessly for many organizations within that community while he served on most of the committees of Peel regional council, Mississauga city council, township of Toronto council and Peel county council.

Councillor Frank McKechnie received many awards for his public service, including Rotary International's highest honour, the Paul Harris Fellowship.

Frank's most endearing quality, which we will always cherish, was his sincere caring for people. For those of us who were privileged to know him and work with him, we will never forget this very gentle man who touched our lives and thousands of others, and always served with great dignity.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Frank's beloved wife, Annette, and their family.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Gas prices all over Ontario continue to be too high and the government of Mike Harris is doing nothing about it. The Liberals have given the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations a solution, but we see no action from the Mike Harris government.

The level of patience in consumers is running on empty and their frustration level is on full. Mike Harris is not gauging the level of anger consumers are getting at the hosing they're receiving at the gas pumps.

Added to this is the fact that the Mike Harris government will impose a new tax on northern motorists starting on September 1 when he institutes the new northern vehicle registration tax, the new Mike Harris tax on northerners.

Mike Harris just doesn't understand, but the northern Liberal caucus is proud that our leader, Dalton McGuinty, and our entire Liberal caucus does. Dalton McGuinty and a Liberal government have committed to scrapping this new tax on northerners.

We know this is an unfair tax which does not recognize the extra costs associated with driving in northern Ontario. This new tax is going to cause my fellow northerners millions of dollars. Clearly, this new tax is another Conservative government tax grab on the backs of northerners.

## NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Recently, this government advised community care access centres of its intention to test a new computer system. Specifically, the long-term care division indicated two or three centres were needed to participate in the beta pilot testing of a new CCAC information system.

Each centre was sent a list of requirements which had to be met in order to participate as a pilot site, and the majority of these criteria make sense. But what caught my interest, and then made me very angry, was the requirement that the pilot site must be within two hours' drive of Toronto. Apparently, this is necessary so that vendors and the CCAC project team can quickly support the pilot site.

As far as I am concerned this is another example of how this Conservative government discriminates against the north. There is no good reason to exclude northern community care access centres from participating in the pilot project. In fact, it would make good sense to specifically include a northern site, to be sure the new computer system will respond to the unique needs and challenges facing northern communities and the community care access centres.

I call upon the minister without portfolio responsible for seniors and the Minister of Health to do the right thing: Quit discriminating against the north and drop this geographic requirement immediately. Select a northern site like the centre in Sudbury and make sure the computer system works right the first time and all the time.

## SCHOOL CURRICULUM

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** As children across Ontario head back to school this week, some of them will discover that school has become more challenging. This is more than just the result of facing a new year and a new grade. This change is the result of the introduction of new curriculum and rigorous performance standards to the classrooms of Ontario.

This September marks the implementation of the government's new curriculum for students in grades 1 to 8. Precise standards in both mathematics and language have been set by the provincial government and will be applied in classrooms across the province.

What will this mean for the children of Ontario? The old, vague Common Curriculum that was introduced by the last government has been replaced by strict new guidelines. These guidelines will stipulate what level of performance students are expected to achieve by the end of each school year. Parents who are interested to know what their child will be responsible for learning this year can simply refer to the curriculum's checklist.

In addition to ensuring our children receive the best possible education, a goal of this new curriculum is to provide teachers and parents with concrete tools by which to measure the progress of students. The introduction of a standardized report card will ensure that all students are measured relative to other students across the province. This also provides greater accountability to parents.

New, higher standards of education will also ensure that our children are prepared for the challenges they will meet later in life, challenges in their jobs, in colleges and universities and in the ever more complex global economy.

**1350**

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce in the Speaker's gallery today Mr Joseph Pararajasingham, member for Batticaloa of the Sri Lankan Parliament. Welcome.

Also, the former member in the 35th Parliament for Halton North, Mr Noel Duigan. Welcome.

# ORAL QUESTIONS

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I have a question for the Premier. During the last election campaign you told the people of Ontario that you had the magical solutions everyone was looking for. You said you would balance the budget, cut income taxes, not close any hospitals, nor cut education budgets. But the truth is, Premier, you're a lousy magician and people are seeing a trail of broken promises everywhere.

Today you're expecting municipalities to take the blame for the promises you can't keep, and you're already blaming municipalities for not being able to absorb $670 million of additional costs that you're downloading on to them. Premier, will you admit today that municipalities will have to absorb additional costs or cut services to their citizens? Will you admit this is not a revenue-neutral exercise?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think if you will go back to the campaign and the Common Sense Revolution, we never said it would be easy. We said it would be difficult. We said there would be sacrifice. We said it would be difficult but that we would be fair, that we would be reasonable, that we could cut taxes, that we could create many more private sector jobs, that we could balance the books, and we're ahead of schedule on all of those.

Secondly, it's not $670 million. We asked municipalities, as their share of the $11.2-billion deficit fiasco that your party and the NDP gave us, to see if on their total spending they could not absorb $1.4 billion in reductions; ie, in 1995, when we took over government, there were transfers to municipalities of $1.4 billion, and we said that by the year 2000, to balance the books, we wanted to work with municipalities to eliminate those grants.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Harris:** We've eliminated half of them. There have been no tax increases as a result of that. They've done a marvellous job and I'm quite confident they can carry on doing that job —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr Cordiano:** Premier, the members of AMO have little faith in your government's promises and the promises you're making. They've certainly lost faith in the consultations thus far.

I want to quote from Hazel McCallion, mayor of Mississauga, who says, "Consultations so far have been a waste of time." Terry Mundell, outgoing head of AMO, said, "You've broken faith with municipalities." The bottom line is that they say your downloading will mean that this time next year the people all over this province will be facing increases in property taxes.

Premier, you're all over the papers today whining about the fact there's a perception out there that people don't believe you. If you're so concerned about your credibility, then come clean: Back up your claims that this will be a revenue-neutral exercise. Show us the numbers. Will you do that today?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As we speak or some time this afternoon, the Ministry of Finance is meeting with AMO, where they are getting both upper-tier and lower-tier numbers. Today at AMO, the new president and the first vice-president, in introducing and thanking me, said: "Thank you, Premier. We believe you; we trust you. If you say it's revenue-neutral, it's revenue-neutral."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Cordiano:** Maybe we should ask the Solicitor General's mother if she believes that statement.

Premier, you introduced legislation and made claims that the download will be revenue-neutral. It's simple. Today again you're telling us you haven't got the numbers to prove it. When the mayors of London, Brampton, Thunder Bay and Mississauga say that the extra cost they'll have shoulder will be in the millions, why shouldn't we believe them? Why should people believe you?

In fact, your own member doesn't believe you. He doubts your credibility. Tony Skarica said: "I won't spread lies for them or anyone else. The truth is, downloading is not revenue-neutral."

**The Speaker:** You can't quote second hand what you can't say first. You can't use it, I'm sorry.

**Mr Cordiano:** I take it back if you allow me to edit that quote and say that the Premier was far from the truth when he said what he said.

**The Speaker:** No —

**Mr Cordiano:** I take it back. I'm sorry.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I appreciate you've withdrawn it, I take it. Thank you.

**Mr Cordiano:** Will you do the right thing and withdraw your downloading legislation, or show us that this will be a revenue-neutral exercise? Do one or the other. Will you come forward with that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Certainly. Of course. We are happy to share the numbers as we are sharing with AMO. I think the Liberal Party had research at AMO this morning where the standing ovation said: "Thank you, Premier. We trust you." But I would have to say this to you: Perhaps you haven't had a chance to talk to staff. We're happy to share those numbers.

Certainly the president of AMO indicated that, as I said. The first vice-president indicated that. The numbers are there on the record. I committed unequivocally and I said that this exercise — Who Does What is to help them deal with the downloading of $1.4 billion that we started in 1995; I asked them if they could handle it. They said, "Yes, we can if you give us tools, if you give us legislation, if you work with us, if you give us time, if you give us interim money along the way."

We're happy to share that with you. I would ask you to check with your research staff. Given they haven't had anything right so far this week, maybe they don't have it right, but I'll share them with you myself.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I believe that he is expected.

**Interjection:** Here he comes now.

**Mrs McLeod:** No. I'll stand down my question.

**The Speaker:** Is he expected? Is that a yes? Yes, he is. Okay, you can stand it down.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier as well. I say to the Premier it is indeed a very strange standing ovation when half the people in the audience sit on their hands. Perhaps the Premier missed that.

When you spoke to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, you tried to make it sound as if everything is fine. You tried to pretend there isn't the download of over $1.2

billion. The reality is, everybody out there in the audience, all the municipal leaders know there's a download, know that it's very severe. What really bothers them is that you don't seem to be worried about what happens to fire services. You don't seem to care about what happens to ambulances. You don't seem to be worried about public health and protection of public health. You don't seem to be worried about policing.

Premier, they are worried. They're worried about all those important services and they keep making the plea to you, "Will you hold off on this until you finally disclose the true numbers," and they can really know how bad this is going to be? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Yes.

**1400**

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, when the new president of AMO withdraws from your implementation committee, when he says, "I'm not going to take part in this implementation committee," because of the download effect, they're trying to send you a message. When over half the delegates at the AMO convention vote against your Bill 136, they're trying to send you a message. Your talk is about consultation but your walk is all about bulldozing. That's the reality of what's going on here. Would you do this as a sign of good faith, withdraw Bill 152 until there is some agreement on the numbers? Will you withdraw that bill?

**Hon Mr Harris:** No.

**Mr Hampton:** Let's try Bill 136. People in municipalities — you saw it. Over half of the delegates at the AMO convention are worried about the long-term labour relations in their communities, are worried about the long-term working environment. The people who provide policing services, the people who provide fire protection, the people who look after public health, the people who provide ambulance services are all very important people. The mayors and reeves out there don't want to have long-term bad labour relations. They want you to withdraw Bill 136. Instead of bulldozing ahead, will you withdraw Bill 136?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I had a meeting, of course, and chatted last night with the president of AMO, Michael Power, former Liberal candidate. I also talked with the outgoing president; I also talked with the first vice-president. They unanimously said: "Take your time. Make sure you get 136 right, but please, please, please, Premier, do not withdraw Bill 136. Take your time, consult with the unions, consult with us, get it right, but we need 136 or the equivalent to have good, peaceful union relations and services for the people of this province." I've respected their wishes.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I have a question again to the Premier. I would say it's showing a sign of respect for democracy when you acknowledge that over half the delegates at the AMO convention voted against your Bill 136.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question concerns the plight of a number of workers in this province who complained to the Ministry of Labour about their health and safety conditions, about the lack of observance of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in their workplace.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** He's going to bounce this to the minister.

**Mr Hampton:** The Ministry of Labour replied, "Since your employer has fired you for complaining, we're not going to investigate the complaint and there's nothing we're going to do about it."

Premier, can you explain? Is this what you mean by "open for business," that workers in Ontario who are now working in a workplace that has serious health and safety concerns are told, "Because your employer has fired you, we're not going not investigate your complaint"?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The member for St Catharines suggests I refer it, and I accept that advice.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I would simply indicate to the member of the opposition that I think the situation you're talking about is a situation where complaints were received by us on July 18. Subsequently, there were eight orders that were issued and some of the employment standards complaints are being investigated at the present time. I can tell you, we are addressing the issue that I believe you're bringing to our attention.

**Mr Hampton:** About three weeks after the complaints were first lodged by the employees and after Ministry of Labour personnel said, "Because the employer has fired you, there's nothing we're going to do about it," the employees, or in this case the fired employees, found themselves a lawyer, and the lawyer wrote to the Ministry of Labour raising all the health and safety issues, all the obvious violations of the act. Only when that lawyer rubbed the Ministry of Labour's face in it, only then did the Ministry of Labour respond.

My question is still the same. These workers complained to their employer, then they complained to the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Labour sloughed them off. Is that the new rule in Ontario, that you have to get a lawyer to go after the Ministry of Labour before you enforce your own laws? Is that the new rule?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would advise you to take a very careful look at the sequence of events, because I would like to indicate to you that there was an investigation that did take place before any letter was received from the lawyer. In fact I have a copy of that letter here, and as I've just indicated to you, the orders were issued before the letter was received.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, I invite you to make that public, because what I've got here is the letter that was written to the Ministry of Labour, written by fax on August 1, and only afterwards, August 14, do we get a handwritten investigation and report by the Ministry of Labour.

The original complaint by the employees was back on July 18, and nothing happened. Every one of those em-

ployees — former employees now, because the employer fired them — will tell you that they were literally told, "Nothing we can do for you because you've been fired." It wasn't until after the letter by lawyer Linda Vannucci that your Ministry of Labour people said, "Gee, we'd better get down there. This looks serious and this could be embarrassing." I'll give it to you. This is the date of your ministry's investigation and report and it is well after the letter from Linda Vannucci.

Is this the new rule in Ontario, that you have to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Labour.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would just respond to you one more time. There was a full and complete investigation done of the workplace and there were subsequently eight orders issued. The investigations regarding the employment standards violations are still under way.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. We're starting to see the first proof of what your taking control of education funding is going to do to kids in the classroom. In your need to take another half a billion dollars out of the education budget, you're going to shortchange the funding for heat, light and school maintenance, and that's only the beginning.

The Toronto area schools spend $6.70 per square foot to heat, light and maintain their schools. They do spend more than the provincial average, in part because 70% of their schools are more than 20 years old, because they keep their schools open to the community at night, and because they maintain 490 classrooms for child care spaces. Minister, which of these areas do you think they should cut to get down to your $5.50 funding? Should they close some of the older schools, should they lock up their schools at night, or should they shut down the child care rooms?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Once again today you present to this chamber absolute nonsense. We will be receiving a report from expert panels who have looked at the best practices for providing a safe environment for students in classrooms in Ontario. We would expect that once that expert panel has reported to us, and it has not yet, we will take their observations, their studies, their conclusions, look at what would be the case in different jurisdictions around the province and make sure that in the final analysis, when we put a funding formula together, it be fair to all students in Ontario and able to provide them with a better quality of education. That's our objective. We are on course to do that, and we are of course receiving expert opinion on how much we should spend and in what area.

**1410**

**Mrs McLeod:** You know very well that your expert task force is about to recommend $5.50 per square foot, which is about a provincial average. And you know very well that you've not given your expert task forces the time to actually look at the unique needs of each region and that you don't actually want to understand those needs anyway. You want to fund everybody at the lowest common denominator and then blame the school boards when they can't meet the needs of their students. That's exactly what you're setting out to do.

Another example: Northern boards have high heating costs for reasons that I think should be obvious. With your $5.50 in funding, the Lakehead board in northwestern Ontario will be $1.8 million short of what it needs to maintain, to heat and to light their schools. In that region it happens that one of the needs is in the rural areas where the hydro rates are 15% higher than in the city.

I wonder whether you think that school board should solve the problem by closing the rural schools to save some of the $1.8 million, or should they just turn off the heat and the lights for kids in the country?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'm shocked and appalled that the member for Fort William would be so poorly informed. We laid out very clearly, before we started down this process of improving on the general legislative grant program — which you failed to correct although studies told you that you should have. When we started to go down this path we specifically mentioned that we know the costs will be different in different areas of the province and that we would address those, and we intend to do that.

I don't know why the member opposite insists on bringing up this conjecture, which is clearly contrary to the record of this government and our intentions that have been stated.

**Mrs McLeod:** This minister is always shocked, appalled and totally irresponsible, even as he takes over educational funding.

I might have thought, since you've decided to take over control of the funding, that you might have some idea of how the decisions that school boards are going to be forced to make will actually affect students in the classrooms in their areas. I would have thought you might have given some thinking to whether some boards might actually be expected to close down older schools and force more students into the classrooms that are left.

I thought you might have suggested to me, "They can solve the problem if they just slash the wages of the custodians," who make an average of $24,000 a year, because your Bill 136 will make that very easy to do. But I thought most likely you would tell me that you wanted the boards to privatize the custodial services, because that's what you wanted in the first place and you only backed away because parents were outraged at the idea.

I want to know what you, the minister responsible for funding, are going to say to parents who don't want dial-a-cleaner their schools when you force school boards to privatize custodial services.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Once again, clearly the member opposite is not well researched on this subject. We have said very clearly that our objectives are to make sure we meet the needs of every student in the province. That's why we have commissioned expert panels to look at what are the best practices in schools in Ontario and other

schools, so we can make sure that at the end of the day we have the right funding formula for students.

You know that the general legislative grant system has made second-class students of some people in Ontario. It's not fair; it's not right. We're going to fix it and we're going to make sure that the dollars we spend in education make a difference with our students. That's why these expert panels are working and that's why people across Ontario are helping us make the right system for our students and for the future of this province. I'm proud of those actions, I'm proud of the people who are working on this, and we will receive their advice and we will make the system better.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is directed to the Minister of Health. I think people in this chamber realize, and some of the public, that you're actually in court this week. You're being sued by the hospitals, along with your commission. You're in court because you've abdicated some of your responsibility as minister. The public wants to know why this expensive process has been made necessary, why you haven't responded, from your own responsibilities that this government grabbed for you under Bill 26.

You're the minister who has the power to talk to hospitals. You're the minister who has decided — you're sitting on your hands — that you won't respond to Doctors Hospital when they tell you that Toronto General Hospital has had access to the commission, that they were not given a fair hearing. You won't respond to Women's College, and Women's College is a unique resource to this province. You will not stand up as minister and deal with them. Tell us, why are you letting Toronto Hospital set health policy in this province and why aren't you being the health minister?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The member knows that the matters are before the court and therefore it's inappropriate of me to comment to any great extent, except to say that the matter is between the commission and the hospitals and all the accusations you just mentioned are strictly between the commission and the hospitals. The government was not involved in the commission's decision-making.

**Mr Kennedy:** The minister would do well to read some of the affidavits coming in, would do well to pay attention to the way the commission has been allowed to operate by him. The commission doesn't have powers; it only is on loan for the minister's powers. The minister refuses to tell us once again why he is sitting on his hands. Why is he letting Toronto General, for example — tell us today, who is the employer of your assistant deputy minister? Who does he work for, the person in charge of hospitals, in charge of restructuring, in charge of long-term care? Who is your assistant deputy minister working for, if you believe you're so far and apart from this operation that is letting Toronto General and other large hospitals set health policy through the restructuring commission?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The assistant deputy minister whom I assume the honourable member is talking about, because he's the assistant deputy minister in charge of hospitals, used to work for the Ontario Hospital Association, not for one particular hospital. He's highly regarded by all hospitals in the province. He's been a tremendous asset, and we're very fortunate that just about three or four months ago he agreed to leave the Ontario Hospital Association and come work for the Ministry of Health.

## CHILD CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I wanted to get you to help me understand the implications of the bill you introduced last week as part of the omnibus downloading bill, the part, schedule C, which affects the Day Nurseries Act.

As you know, I've asked you a number of times in this House about how we can be sure that municipalities under financial crunch don't cut back on the number of child care spaces. To my delight, you responded in this House that you were going to make the provision of child care service and service levels mandatory. I've got some quotes from you on that which I can refer to.

But in looking at the legislation, I see how you have made mandatory cost-sharing for prescribed services beyond the current subsidies — wage subsidies and resource centres and other things. I see how you have made the delivery in terms of licensing and those sorts of things mandatory. But nowhere in the legislation do I see where you guarantee service levels, the number of spaces, or that municipalities won't, in facing budget cuts, cut back on their portion and therefore lose spaces. You said you were going to make it mandatory. Am I missing something? Is there another way in which you're going to address that?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** As the member knows, the legislation sets out the framework for the transfers of funding responsibilities etc. There is much work that obviously will be done at committee, much work that will be done in terms of the development of the regulations, and I wouldn't want to prejudge that process.

However, I would like to confirm to the honourable member what we have done, what we are doing and, assuming the legislation passes, what our intention is: that the amount of service being provided by a municipality as of the beginning of this year is the amount of service that the funding is being calculated on. I agree that we don't want to lose any financial resources in the system or any spaces that are already there. We've had an increase in licensed spaces. We want to make sure we can maintain that service, and that is certainly the policy intent of the government.

**Ms Lankin:** It's reassuring to hear you reiterate that. You have said that in the House before. On February 10, you said something very similar, that that's the point

we're starting from, that's where we're calculating from. On June 17, you said: "We also know at the end of every year...unfortunately some municipalities have not been able to pick up their 20 cents when we've had the 80 cents on the table.... That's why we're changing the system...to make it mandatory." You're quoted in the Star as saying, "But participation in child care will be mandatory and, unlike the current situation, cities will no longer be able to cut day care programs when they face a budget crunch."

I want to work with you to make that happen, but I've looked through your bill; it's not there. You have made cost-sharing mandatory and you have made licensing delivery mandatory. You have not guaranteed the service levels. You have not made the number of spaces or the level of service mandatory. That's what you promised. Will you amend the bill to make sure that's what you deliver?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I find it passing strange that in this Legislature we're frequently told we don't listen, there isn't consultation and that somehow or other the committee process is not being used. I have indicated to the honourable member the policy intent of the government. I have indicated that this legislation will go through the process as other pieces of legislation do.

If there need to be amendments that make our intent clearer, I'm certainly prepared to consider those, although I would like to remind the honourable member that we have taken a number of steps to try to make sure the child care system that is there continues to provide the support that we know many working parents, sole-support parents, need. We have more licensed spaces now than we did two years ago. We have made a regulation change so that municipalities have more flexibility and more resources to pick up subsidies. We have also made additional money through the tax credit for low-income families, which will amount to $140 million, so they will be able to better afford the child care their families need.

**1420**

## RÉFORME DU RÈGLEMENT

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac-Nipigon) :** Un point d'ordre, Monsieur le Président : J'aimerais, avec respect, attirer votre attention sur le Règlement de l'Assemblée législative ici en Ontario, à la page 15, «Les Règles de débat :

«22(a) Tout député qui désire obtenir la parole se lève de sa place et s'adresse au Président de l'Assemblée législative, en anglais ou en français, en le désignant par son titre.»

Vous êtes certainement au courant, Monsieur le Président, comme député ici à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, que ma langue maternelle est le français. Il y a quelques jours, le gouvernement a choisi de déposer une motion qui changeait le Règlement. J'aimerais porter à votre attention que, d'après mon humble avis, et je demande votre opinion, tout ce qui s'est produit depuis que le gouvernement a décidé de changer le Règlement n'est pas constitutionnel en vertu du manque de matériel pour que un et tous les députés puissent avoir l'opportunité de s'exprimer en français.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Cochrane South.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Sur le même point d'ordre, en tant que député néo-démocrate de Cochrane-Sud, j'ai été délégué par mon caucus à assister à l'assemblée de l'Association des municipalités de l'Ontario. Aujourd'hui c'est la première journée, comme vous le savez, que j'ai l'opportunité de venir ici à la Chambre pour participer à la période de questions.

Comme vous le savez, le point que je fais est celui-ci : le Règlement doit être imprimé en anglais et en français pour tous les députés de l'Assemblée. Le gouvernement a encore oublié les francophones. L'information a été imprimée en anglais ; elle n'est pas disponible en français. Je vous dis que ce n'est pas acceptable ; c'est bien proche à un modèle avec ce gouvernement. Je vous demande de voir à cette situation immédiatement et, si on ne l'a pas en français, que l'on ajourne jusqu'à ce qu'on puisse revenir avec l'information en français dont on a besoin pour faire notre ouvrage comme francophones ici à l'Assemblée.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On that point, Speaker, we hope that you would rule, with regard to standing order 22, that if both official languages can be used in this House, then it is proper and in order that the standing orders under which this House is constituted and operates should be provided in both official languages. Right now we only have these orders in English. These orders came into effect, supposedly on Monday, as a result of the motion that was passed in this House at the instigation of the government, which wanted to change the rules.

The question then arises, if the standing orders are not provided in both official languages which are used in the Legislative Assembly, is the House properly constituted in acting on these rules? If the House is not properly constituted, then that raises questions about all the things that have transpired in this place in the last number of days.

The question is, are we in order if we are operating under rules that are only provided in one of the languages that are appropriately used in this House? If we are not properly constituted and we are out of order because the standing orders have not been provided in both official languages, then what is the status of everything that has transpired in this House this week?

**The Speaker:** Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, you've already made a ruling with regard to the standing orders, last Wednesday I guess it was. Your ruling at that point was that the standing orders would come into effect at midnight on Thursday. There was no provision in that particular ruling that the standing orders would not be in effect until translated. You ruled that they would come into effect midnight Thursday night. You did not rule that they would come into effect when a final version of the French translation was available.

The word "service" under the French Language Services Act is defined, I'm told, as "any service or procedure

that is provided to the public by a government agency or institution of the Legislature and includes all communications for the purpose."

There is a clear distinction between the public and the service provider. The Legislature is the service provider, not the service recipient. Consequently, the translation is not required. However, the translation obviously is being prepared. I'm not so sure when the clerks are going to bring it forward, but it is not required for the House to carry on its activities. If any member needs assistance with translation, then that assistance is available.

I would say that in the act the only references to French-language services are the right to use English or the right to use French in the debates, but it does not require in the act that the standing orders be translated into French. Notwithstanding that, that translation is under way and my expectation — and the clerks could respond more directly — is that the translation will be available in the near future.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to have to recess just briefly to investigate a few issues. What I want to do before I leave — you have another point of order?

**Mr Bisson:** On the same point of order : Je sais que vous prenez cette situation très au sérieux. Je vais vous passer un autre morceau d'information. Comme vous le savez, c'est la responsabilité du gouvernement, quand on amende des lois ici à l'Assemblée et on les reporte, que la législation soit reportée en anglais comme en français.

Je pense que cela a besoin d'être lié à cette situation. Quand ça vient au Règlement de la Chambre, le même Règlement a besoin d'avoir lieu. C'est le point que je veux additionner et auquel vous avez besoin de refléchir.

**The Speaker:** I want to say first and foremost that we are duly constituted. That is not what I will be ruling on, with respect to whether or not we're constituted. We are. What we have done, we've done. We are operating under the new standing orders.

I will take into consideration the comments outside of those particular issues and review them and report back in 15 minutes. Stop the clock. Thank you.

*The House recessed from 1430 to 1449.*

**The Speaker:** I'd like to thank the members for their submissions. I undertook to get a number of copies at the table for any members who would wish to have the standing orders translated for them. If they would just go to the table clerks, they'd be happy to provide them.

Further questions?

## METROPOLITAN TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Yesterday in the Toronto Star the lead editorial was talking about the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library. That editorial describes this library as a jewel that most Ontarians really treasure. The editorial went on to comment that there are some 1.5 million visits to that library every year. It's my understanding that this week there's a brief closure of that particular library and it's suggested that this is because of provincial budget cuts.

Can the minister explain to the House, and possibly to the many patrons of that library, why the library is closed this week and what roles your ministry and the Ontario government had to play in this action?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** I'd like to thank the member for Northumberland for his question. I find it really hard to believe that one could suggest that the provincial government is responsible for the closure of the Metro — and I repeat "Metro" — Toronto reference library. The Metro Toronto reference library receives 86% of its funding from the local level. In fact, my ministry only provides it with 8%. Our relationship with the reference library won't change as a result of Bill 109. Under the legislation, Bill 148, provisions have been specifically made for the retention of the reference library.

This was a point that had the support of all members of the standing committee which examined Bill 109. The reference library is a key provincial resource and that's why we continue to support it. The decision to close the library this week was made by the Metro Toronto library board.

**Mr Galt:** Along with that recent editorial I heard some comments down at the conference of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in connection with the Who Does What exercise that libraries may be very easy targets when the municipalities are looking at some of their cuts.

My constituents certainly value libraries very much and they want to keep them open. What reassurance can you give to my constituents that libraries and their important services will not be closed as a direct result of our government and its Who Does What exercise?

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** Obviously we don't agree with the doom-and-gloom gang across the way. When the Who Does What exercise was announced, the president of AMO at that time, Terry Mundell, commented specifically on libraries and stated that he welcomed the changes. He does not believe that budgets will be decreased as a result of those changes. We're simply saying, who better to make decisions about local library service than those in the community who use them? That's why we call them local libraries.

This government believes that municipalities will make responsible decisions. They already fund an average of 85% of local library costs. Now we're giving them greater flexibility and tools by which they can make these decisions to make sure they can operate their services more effectively.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday evening I attended, on behalf of our caucus, a memorial service to a woman who was killed as a result of a terrible accident at Steeles Avenue and Highway 404. A truck

went through, came off the road, jumped the berm, smashed into this woman's home and killed her as she was doing her laundry. Last evening was the first anniversary of her tragic death.

At the time of the accident you promised speedily to deal with the issue of a berm or special wall to provide protection for that community. You have made several promises subsequent to that. My question is this: Why, after one year, has absolutely nothing been done, other than to talk about the question, to build a retaining wall or a berm to afford protection to the residents who still live in that community?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I'm disappointed with the member asking that question because I really feel it is a very partisan question and I wonder if it has anything to do with the election going on presently in that riding. I want to say this: The previous member of that riding treated it as a non-partisan issue and I want to commend her for that. I wish I could say the same thing for the member opposite.

I believe MTO has acted very admirably and acted very immediately on the concerns of the community. I believe we have done a lot of things to get us to the position that we presently are in. Again I want to say to the member, I'm disappointed that he asked such a partisan question.

**Mr Duncan:** You promised that community a year ago, one year ago, that you would deal with the question. You promised the community last November, and we cooperated with you. I have communicated with your office off the record on a number of occasions. We were invited by the residents of that community to attend this session, to attend the memorial and to plant a tree, and we were glad to do that. We were glad to do it but sorry that we had to do it because you failed to take action.

If this is such a partisan issue on our part, why did you send a letter to every resident in that court after you have broken five promises? In your letter you said that North York Hydro had not dealt with the questions around power. North York informed us yesterday that they've dealt with it. Let's quit talking about partisan issues.

Will your staff meet with the people of that community tomorrow and give them a plan so that that berm can be built and the retaining wall can be built and any future tragedy can be averted in this terrible situation?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I am not surprised, obviously, because it is a bunch of manure. We have been in touch with the municipality. We have been in touch also with the community. We've tried to resolve the problem right the first time. In other words, we went to the drawing board and made efforts to see what was going to work, what was going to prevent a future tragedy.

We have continuously kept the municipality in touch. Councillor David Shiner says MTO has done everything they possibly could do, and it was because of the utility's relocation that we were not able to react as quickly as maybe we should have. But things are under control, and yes, North York Hydro did agree; yesterday they agreed. So contrary to what the member is saying, it is partisanship, and I am really disappointed in you, Mr Duncan.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. You're aware of the substantial increase in gasoline prices happening across the province and the country in the last couple of weeks and the hue and cry that's been raised. You've stated in this Legislature that gas pricing will probably be on the agenda of the interprovincial ministers' conference next month.

Yesterday my federal NDP colleague, John Solomon from Regina-Lumsden-Lake Centre, outlined an action plan which calls on the federal government to open the books on gas pricing by conducting a public inquiry. My colleague states in a press release:

"Setting energy prices is no different than regulating communications services. When Rogers cable set prices which were deemed unfair, they voluntarily rolled them back. When Bell Canada wants to increase prices, the CRTC reviews their request to ensure it is fair and justified. Gas pricing is no different. Gas prices are viewed by the public as being set unfairly and unjustifiably and they must be reviewed."

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Martin:** Minister, will you today join the call for a federal inquiry on this matter?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I've got to tell you that I, like everyone else in this whole House — we're all outraged at the prices for consumers these days with the high prices.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Why don't you do something about it?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I hear some babbling over there from the member for St Catharines, but I might remind him that he certainly had the opportunity to do something. To his credit, Mr Martin — he stood up the other day in the House, I think it was yesterday, and indicated, as I recall, that Bob Rae was elected businessman of the year in Buffalo, because his government had the same issue and I think he concluded they did nothing. At least we're going to put this on the agenda for the interprovincial ministers conference.

We feel strongly about this. We strongly believe consumers in Ontario should get the best price, and certainly this will be a discussion we'll have, but I also remind you that this is a federal issue, as the member has recognized. I appreciate the fact that he does recognize that.

**1500**

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I'd like to bring to the minister's attention the effects of these price increases, particularly in northern Ontario, the economic effects this is having across the north on the cost of goods, the cost of travel, the effect on tourism and the effect on the travelling public in a part of the province where a vehicle is a necessity.

The regular price of gasoline in Dryden today is 65.9 cents a litre; in South Porcupine, 68.5 cents a litre; in

Heyden, just north of Sault Ste Marie, it's 68 cents a litre; in Kapuskasing, it's 69.9 cents a litre; and in Wawa, it is 72.5 cents a litre.

We recognized when we were in government that this government could do something and we took the registration fee off motor vehicles for northern Ontario drivers. You reimposed it. You reimposed it at a time when gasoline prices are higher than they were when we took it off. Is the minister prepared to recommend to his colleagues in cabinet that northern Ontario drivers will no longer have to pay a registration fee in order to —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Algoma.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** We believe this is bad for the consumers in Ontario. We believe that by putting it on the table with the ministers across this country — this is not an Ontario issue only — this is a way we can address the issue finally.

I will remind the member for Algoma, though, that when the Honourable Brian Charlton was the minister under your government, sir, he indicated —this is a quote from him; it comes from Hansard of May 27, 1992 — "In fact he was talking about giant Canadian oil companies, and the problem to which the member for St Catharines refers" — at least he's consistent — "is in fact a national problem. The price increases to which he refers are not price increases that have been imposed exclusively in the province of Ontario this week; they have been imposed right across the country."

Yes, we believe it's bad for the consumer in Ontario, yes, we believe the federal government should do something and, yes, we're going to put it on the table at the interprovincial ministers conference so we can do something to protect the consumer in Ontario.

## INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question today is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Eliminating trade barriers between the provinces has been a long-standing issue that is very important to all Canadians. Most people now recognize that the flow of products and services with our neighbours to the south is easier than confronting trade barriers between our provinces.

I have heard that the new chair of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has said Canada must break down interprovincial trade barriers for the sake of international as well as domestic trade, and that means jobs. I wouldn't imagine the federal Liberal government is listening to these comments, but I know Ontario is. Can the minister please tell this House what Ontario is doing to help resolve this problem between the provinces once and for all?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I want to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for his question. It's a very timely one. I have to say that resolving this issue has been a particularly challenging thing for us. We recognize the positive advantage of a more open, barrier-free trading environment in Canada.

As you know, this government is making every effort to improve the business climate. That's why our government is taking the lead in interprovincial trade. Last year we signed three bilateral trade agreements with Quebec. Two dealt with procurement in the broader public sector and one with construction labour mobility. In fact, the Quebec minister and I have offered the procurement agreement to any other interested parties. We hope to hear from them and we will pursue it.

**Mr Newman:** I thank the minister for his insight. I know my constituents in Scarborough Centre will be pleased to know our government is listening and acting on what they hear. Perhaps some of the other levels of government can take a lesson from our minister.

My constituents, like all Ontarians, are becoming more and more upset that nothing is being done to remove these trade barriers. Can the minister tell the House where we go from here and what can be done once and for all to eliminate trade barriers between all the provinces in Canada?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I'm happy to respond to that supplementary. I want to assure the members that we're doing everything possible to move this issue towards resolution.

In April, as an example, I wrote to my trade colleagues in the other provinces and I urged them to conclude an agreement. I also wrote to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which represents 170,000 businesses in Canada. The chamber has pleaded with the federal and provincial governments to get rid of the remaining barriers. The former president indeed has commended Ontario's lead role on changing the system as far as internal trade is concerned.

There will be a trade ministers' meeting this fall and I'm sure the trade barriers will be the main issue on the agenda. I'm committed to removing interprovincial trade barriers and will continue to urge my colleagues in other provinces to agree on a solution at the trade ministers' meeting. I believe better internal trade will result in improved external trade as well. We are doing all that we can in this government to move the business environment to a much better situation.

## CASINOS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Culture, not the Minister of Natural Resources, who was worried that I was going to ask him a question about the abysmal appointment to the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the Harris government is about to prey upon the most desperate, the most vulnerable and often the poorest people in our society by establishing 44 permanent 24-hour-a-day casinos in 44 different neighbourhoods in Ontario. You have been very evasive when asked by members of the news media how much money the provincial government is going to get from these charity casinos, as you call them. Will you reveal today to the people of Ontario how much money the

Harris government will be bleeding from the most vulnerable, the most desperate and often the poorest people in our society? Will you please not palm this question off on someone else?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** Thank you for the question. I'll refer it to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I really think what we should do with this issue is put it into context for a second. If we're looking at the charity gaming clubs, the table games are being divided 50-50 between the government and the charities. We're talking about $80 million there for the charities, $80 million they didn't have before, quite frankly. We're talking about 150 video lottery terminals and a charity gaming club. That's not really a lot of machines.

To put this further into context, there are other costs that have to go into this equation, of course. There's 10% that's going to the operators — we all know that — and if you look at the racetracks, we're talking about 15% of the proceeds going to the operators there. We're talking about $9 million going to assist in terms of problem gambling. On top of that there are other types of undetermined costs at this time.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** We have the installation of machines, a central computer system, the maintenance of the system, the regulation of the system, the ongoing monitoring. At the end of the day, the Ministry of Finance has estimates —

**The Speaker:** That can happen in the supplementary. Supplementary.

**Mr Bradley:** It's quite obvious that the government is getting the lion's share of the money, that you're simply using the charities of the province as a front to bleed more money out of desperate people to fill the coffers of the provincial government because you've chosen to give a tax break to the richest people in our society. That's what this is all about.

You're also going to have very significant impacts on a number of neighbourhoods in this province. I don't think you should be establishing these things anywhere, personally, but since you people are supposedly going to ask the people in the neighbourhoods where they're going for their permission or their acquiescence to these, are you now prepared to say that wherever one of these —

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr Bradley:** — establishments, these casinos, is to be set up, you will have a local referendum to have the people judge on those?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** If you want to talk about culpability, I'd like to remind the member that his government under David Peterson brought in the three-day roving casinos.

**Mr Bradley:** You're missing the whole point.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** No, you're missing the point. Inherent in this whole argument is that at risk is the integrity of gaming in Ontario. To the NDP's credit, they brought in some rules to regulate gaming in this province. You did not.

I'll tell you something, since you refer to Staff Sergeant Fotia, who is with the OPP, who indicates — let's look at the facts. This is from the Ottawa Citizen. "In the first six months of this year nine casino operators, or more than 10% of the total, have been charged with 34 separate offences under the Gaming Control Act and they face 15 gaming-related charges under the Criminal Code" because the system right now does not work. We're trying to bring some integrity to this system, which you had a chance to do. You did not.

**1510**

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Premier. The handwritten notes from the meeting on September 5, 1995, that were tabled, state, "Public safety not an issue, reduces urgency."

It seems to indicate that the interministerial committee and the OPP felt that the occupation of the Stony Pointers was peaceful and non-violent. The OPP is quoted as saying in the press: "Our position is to control the situation and to come to a peaceful resolution. We're not in a rush. We are not looking to ram anything through."

Premier, if this is the case, that the OPP identified no public risk and the interministerial committee meeting held that the public safety was not an issue, why did the OPP build-up occur the next day? Why did the OPP use force to enter Ipperwash Provincial Park? Was it because you had directed Deb Hutton to say, "Out of the park only — nothing else"?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No.

# PETITIONS

## COURT DECISION

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas women's going topless in public promotes exploitation of women's sexuality and prostitution, taking away the moral and ethical values of our children and ourselves;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take this issue seriously and produce a law making it illegal for women to go topless in the province of Ontario."

That's signed by 130 of my constituents and constituents from S-D-G.

## RENT REGULATION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** "We, the undersigned concerned citizens of Ontario, Canada, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that:

"We do not agree with the proposed Tenant Protection Act, Bill 96, section 200, which would make it legal for landlords to refuse to rent to low-income people.

"Many landlords would be happy to be able to legally refuse to rent to people on welfare, FBA, disability, single mothers, seniors with low pensions and other low-income people such as large numbers of minorities people.

"This change to the Ontario Human Rights Code is a violation of the Charter of Rights which Canada signed.

"We therefore request that the words 'income information' be removed from Bill 96, section 200."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** "Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that indeed northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

I affix my signature to this petition.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition with 188 names. It reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas at this time in the province of Ontario it is not illegal for a woman to appear topless in public, and due to the fact that this lack of restriction offends a large percentage of Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to introduce legislation that would make it illegal for a woman to appear topless in any public place."

## PAY EQUITY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has introduced Bill 136; and

"Whereas Bill 136 strips entitlements to employee status and therefore pay equity rights for home child care providers; and

"Whereas home child care providers are predominantly female; and

"Whereas home child care providers are one of the lowest-paid groups of workers in the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to withdraw Bill 136 and its implications for the Pay Equity Act."

Since we're in the middle of debate on Bill 136, I proudly add my name to these citizens'.

## SCHOOL COUNCILS

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Parent Council is a group of politically appointed individuals who do not have school council representation at their table; and

"Whereas the Ontario Parent Council communicates directly with the Minister of Education and Training on what they assume to be the needs and concerns of school councils across Ontario; and

"Whereas school councils of Ontario are made up of dedicated, thoughtful parent volunteers who, regardless of their political beliefs, work for the betterment of the education and welfare of their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to establish an elected provincial board of school councils that will speak directly to the Minster of Education and Training on issues related to school councils."

This is signed by dozens of constituents from my riding and from Thunder Bay, and I affix my own signature.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health, Women's College Hospital."

I support this petition and I attach to my signature to it.

## COURT DECISION

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Criminal Code falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government of Canada;

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that women have the lawful right to appear topless in public;

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to meet the needs and requirements of municipal and provincial governments in Canada and to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the government of the province of Ontario to urge the government of Canada to pass new legislation or amend existing legislation to ban appearing topless in public places."

This petition is signed by 17 people from Keswick who are constituents of my riding of Durham-York. I agree with this petition and I have affixed my name to it.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario" — especially this month — "and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that indeed northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health, Women's College Hospital."

I will affix my signature to this petition as I fully agree with it.

**1520**

## PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, has proposed the fingerprinting of all Ontario citizens; and

"Whereas fingerprinting Ontarians was never promised in the Common Sense Revolution or in his election campaign; and

"Whereas universal fingerprinting of Ontario citizens is a direct violation of basic civil rights and fundamental rights of privacy; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is intervening and intruding into all aspects of daily life, from megacities, user fees, rent controls and market value taxes, which he never promised in the election campaign;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to oppose Mike Harris's plan to fingerprint Ontario citizens, and to respect their privacy and to stop creating a mega-government that does not respect the basic freedom and individuality of the citizens of Ontario."

I've attached my name to that petition as well.

## CANCER PREVENTION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition which reads:

"Petition to reprint and enact the recommendations of the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer:

"We, the undersigned, request that the Ministry of Health reprint the Report of the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer, March 1995, and that the Ontario government set up the cancer prevention network in order to enact the report's strategies and targets for reduction of site-specific cancer incidents;

"Further, we demand that primary prevention be a major focus at Cancer Care Ontario and that at least three members of its board have a prevention focus which incorporates environmental factors."

I will affix my signature to this petition as I fully support it.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I've a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that indeed northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

I proudly affix my signature to this petition.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition signed by hundreds and hundreds of people regarding the Wellesley Central Hospital Staying Alive campaign.

"We, the undersigned, are vehemently opposed to the proposed closure of the Wellesley Central Hospital.

"We see this as cutting services which will negatively affect the overall health of our community.

"We are deeply concerned about our future health care for treatment of acute illness and emergency care.

"We support the alliance between Wellesley Central Hospital and Women's College Hospital as the only solution."

I'm proud to affix my signature.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the consumers, feel gas prices are too high throughout Ontario;

"Whereas we, the consumers, support the Ontario Liberal caucus's attempt to have the Mike Harris government introduce predatory gas pricing legislation;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want the Mike Harris government to act so that the consumer can get a break at the pumps rather than going broke at them;

"Whereas we, the consumers, are fuming at being hosed at the pumps and want Mike Harris to gauge our anger;

"Furthermore we, the consumers, want Mike Harris to know we want to be able to go to the pumps and fill our gas tanks without emptying our pockets;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce predatory gas pricing legislation in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps."

I'll be affixing my signature to this.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that indeed northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

I have affixed my name to that petition as well.

## AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Fort Frances ambulance dispatch not be moved to Kenora."

This is signed by over 100 petitioners, and I have affixed my name as well.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on July 15, 1996, the government of Ontario forced seniors with incomes over $16,018 to pay an annual $100 deductible on prescription drugs;

"Whereas this user fee imposes significant financial hardship on vulnerable seniors;

"Whereas on April 1, 1997, the government of Ontario unfairly and knowingly forced Ontario seniors to pay that $100 deductible again;

"Whereas the time between July 15, 1996, and April 1, 1997, is only eight and a half months and not one year;

"Whereas the Ontario government has wrongly taken an additional $30 million out of the pockets of seniors for prescription drugs;

"Whereas Ontario seniors feel cheated by the government of Ontario and this $30-million ripoff shows a tremendous disrespect for Ontario seniors;

"Therefore be it resolved that the government of Ontario credit Ontario seniors for the three and a half months' overpayment they were forced to pay on prescription drugs by making the effective date for the 1998 $100 deductible July 15, 1998, instead of April 1, 1998."

I have affixed my name to that petition as well.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over half the people in Ontario are women;

"Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women have special medical needs since their bodies are not the same as men's;

"Women's College Hospital is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"Without Women's College Hospital, the women of Ontario and of the world will lose a health resource that will not be duplicated elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

This is signed by 92 citizens from all over the province, and I am proud to affix my signature.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that indeed northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

I have affixed my name to that petition as well.

**1530**

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1997 (NO. 2)

## LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO (N$^{O}$ 2)

Resuming the adjourned debate on Bill 148, An Act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new City of Toronto / Projet de loi 148, Loi traitant de questions se rapportant à la constitution de la nouvelle cité de Toronto.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I'm pleased to be able to rejoin the debate where I started off last night. I really didn't get an opportunity to get into my speech last evening because I was interrupted by the member for Yorkview when he was using several delaying tactics to impede my ability to represent the people of Scarborough Centre here in the Legislature. I think it's quite indicative of the opposition —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the member for Scarborough Centre imputes motives to the member for Yorkview. That is against the orders of the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** To the member for London Centre, raising the point of order, I apologize. I was in conversation with the Clerk. I did not hear the member for Scarborough Centre or what he is alluded to have said. However, the member for Scarborough Centre, if you in fact have impugned the motives or a statement from the honourable members, I leave it to your best judgement as a gentleman of the Legislature and a member —

**Mr Newman:** Thank you, Speaker. I don't believe I have, but I will withdraw it none the less.

The point I was trying to make is that I sit here in my place and read the words on the wall: "Audi Alteram Partem," which means, "Listen to the other side." To me, it means not just government members listening to opposition members, but opposition members listening to government members. I think that's something that is lost in the discussion.

I also just want to put on the —

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member is talking about listening to the other side. There is no quorum in this House at this time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum present?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Newman:** I'm pleased to re-rejoin the debate today on Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act (No. 2). The City of Toronto Act, 1997, became law in April of this year and provides the basic legislative framework to establish the new municipal corporation. It was intended to indicate the overall direction of our government and to allow the November municipal elections to go ahead as scheduled. I'm proud that our government has achieved that.

The second city of Toronto bill is a surprise to no one. Our government has said from the outset of debate on the first bill, Bill 103, that we would be introducing a second bill to deal with the administrative, technical and specific transitional matters surrounding the amalgamation process. This bill is about protecting services to the people of Metropolitan Toronto, services that they currently enjoy,

services that they can expect and have begun to depend on.

What would happen to my constituent in Scarborough Centre who has to take the TTC to work on January 2, 1998, if it was not for this bill? Would the TTC continue to operate? And what about those 157,000 new jobs that have been created in the province of Ontario, many of them in Metropolitan Toronto and many of them within Scarborough and Scarborough Centre? How would these people be able to get to work? This bill ensures that services currently available to all residents will continue to be available during the transition period.

This bill is not about new powers. It is about a continuation of powers currently afforded to Metro council, powers currently afforded to Scarborough council, powers currently afforded to North York, Etobicoke, East York, Toronto and York city councils. This bill is a necessary step. It is for the most part a housekeeping bill that needs to be passed quickly to protect the residents of Metro Toronto.

I say to the members opposite, stop stalling, stop playing political games, stop looking for media hits, and let's get on with passing this bill so that my constituents in Scarborough Centre can feel secure, as they should, that their municipal services will continue after January 1, 1998.

Why are the members opposite stalling this bill? They should be fully supportive, shouldn't they? Even the member for Riverdale last night said that it's a simple bill. If I say it's a simple bill, let's pass it; let's get on with it. Let's get on to the other pieces of legislation that need to be discussed in this place. After all, they seem to think they are the only ones in this House looking out for the people of Metropolitan Toronto. Or are they?

I find it interesting that the member for Oakwood, who just happens to be spearheading Mel Lastman's campaign for mayor, would not be calling for quick passage of this bill so that his candidate could reassure the people of Metro Toronto that their services will be indeed protected during the transition. The member for York South, who is actively involved in Barbara Hall's campaign, should also be supporting this bill that protects the residents of his riding, along with every resident in Metropolitan Toronto.

We know why members are not supporting this bill even though they know full well that it is necessary and that it is correct: because they won't have a shot at getting any media hits. That's what is important to them. That type of rhetoric and political gamesmanship is what the people of Metropolitan Toronto do not need. They've had enough of it.

What the people need are hardworking politicians, politicians committed to creating a better Toronto, a stronger Toronto and a more vibrant Toronto, politicians like Scarborough councillor Paul Mushinski and Scarborough councillor Mike Tzekas, who I've had the pleasure of speaking with on numerous occasions regarding the creation of the new city of Toronto. Councillor Mushinski and Councillor Tzekas have told me that Bill 148 is needed. They didn't come to the Bill 103 hearings like many of the socialist-leaning councillors from other municipalities who, I might add, came with cameras and had pictures taken, which I'm sure will show up in campaign literature this fall.

These councillors understand that their constituents need to feel secure that their services will be protected during the transition. Councillors Mushinski and Tzekas are working hard on behalf of their constituents, working to keep them informed and working to protect their services. They are not playing political games like the members opposite and like a number of municipal politicians are. All along, councillors Mushinski and Tzekas have said they will work to make the new city of Toronto the best it can be and to ensure that their constituents retain uninterrupted services. I applaud them for that.

At this time I want to make an appeal today to every candidate running for municipal office in the new city of Toronto. I say to them, I want those candidates to pledge to the people of Metropolitan Toronto that they will do everything within their power to make the new city of Toronto work, to make the new city the most vibrant city in the world. If these candidates will not make that pledge to the residents of Metropolitan Toronto, I suspect the voters will be quick to deal with them.

**1540**

I hope we'll soon have the cooperation of the opposition parties to ensure that the services provided Metropolitan Toronto's residents remain in place for a unified Toronto. It's only a hope, but I suspect that they will continue to play games as they did last night and as they did here this afternoon. It is certainly in the best interests of everyone to ensure that this bill is passed in a timely manner.

Let's examine what this bill ensures for the residents of Metropolitan Toronto.

It ensures that the operation of the TTC will continue as usual. How can the Liberals and NDP members here today be against that?

It ensures that the operation of the CNE, the Metropolitan Toronto Zoo, the Hummingbird Centre and the Guild Inn, which is in the riding of Scarborough East, will continue as usual. I say again, how can the members of the Liberal and NDP parties be against that?

It ensures that the operation of ambulance services will continue as usual. I wonder how the members opposite can be against that.

It ensures that the operation of police services and lifesaving services for Toronto harbour will continue as usual. I ask you, Speaker, how can the opposition parties be against that?

It ensures that the operation of homes for the aged will continue as usual, and I wonder how the opposition parties could be against that. It ensures that the regulation of street vending will continue as usual, and I wonder how the opposition parties can be against that. It ensures that the operation of conservation authority lands will continue as usual. Again I ask myself, how can the Liberal Party and the NDP be against that? It ensures that the operation of the licensing commission will continue as usual. It

ensures that the operation of the Toronto Island ferry will continue as usual.

It ensures that the new city will continue as usual to plan and act in case of emergencies. It ensures that the new city can continue to act and to enter into water supply and sewage treatment agreements. It ensures that the new city will continue as usual to receive and dispose of liquid and solid waste and that the new city will continue to establish and operate controlled access roads. It ensures that existing official plans of municipalities will continue as usual, and I wonder how the opposition parties can be against that.

It ensures that pensions and benefits of municipal and local board employees and retirees will continue as usual. I know that's something that is very important to the members on this side of the House and I would trust that the opposition members in the Liberal Party and the NDP would move to get this bill going forward so that the pensions and benefits of retired municipal and local board employees will continue as usual. It's something that I think they would want to be in favour of, but perhaps they're not. We'll see in their responses.

It will ensure the library board, the health board, the historical board and the parking authority for residents of the new city of Toronto.

I challenge the members opposite to get this bill passed and get on with the important work ahead of creating a vibrant new city of Toronto. I ask them today on behalf of the residents of Scarborough, I ask them today on behalf of the residents of the city of Toronto, I ask them today on behalf of the residents of East York, I ask them today on behalf of the residents of Etobicoke, the residents of North York and the residents of the city of York, let's have a smooth and orderly transition to this new city of Toronto where we move from seven municipalities into one municipality.

I ask the members opposite to speed it up. Let's get Bill 148 passed and we can get on to other legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I enjoyed hearing the member opposite's speech as he talked about how this bill would ensure all of the services that Metro Toronto provides currently to its citizens. The member failed to outline for the people of this great city that in fact these services were being provided before megacity was invented by this government and the only thing that's in question here is whether these services will continue to be provided after megacity.

This bill is made possible because the government moved so quickly to enact megacity, rushed right into it and is now trying to ram it down people's throats. In fact, the only reason that this bill is necessary is because the government got it wrong the first time when they brought in their megacity bill. There are gaps throughout this bill. This is a fix-it bill.

What the member failed to tell us was that this government hasn't ensured for the people of this city that property taxes won't go up as a result of their megacity bill. This bill fails to ensure that those services that people in Metro Toronto have come to appreciate and come to value and that have come to become very critical in their lives will continue to be there in the future, child care, TTC. He talked about the TTC. Service has been cut by the TTC over the years. More specifically in the last couple of years there have been cuts to those kinds of services. GO Transit is being dumped on to municipalities. Social housing is being dumped on to municipalities. The member opposite failed to tell the people of this city and this government fails to tell the people of the city how they're going to shoulder that burden for social housing and additional social costs that they're dumping on to municipalities.

That's why this legislation is being passed today. You need to fix up what you did before and that won't get you very far either.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member for Scarborough Centre. I want to address his comments that opposition members are somehow game-playing in opposing a bill like this and it's all about media hits.

First of all, I think that should have been ruled out of order. There is a sort of imputing of motive there. But let me say to you that if you review the Hansard of my opening remarks on this bill, I think I made it clear that my opposition and that of my colleagues is because we oppose the concept of the megacity to begin with. But given that there is a megacity, I agree entirely that there is a need for this kind of a transition bill.

What the member didn't talk about, when he said on behalf of the residents of Scarborough, the residents of Toronto, the residents of Etobicoke, the residents of York, the residents of North York and the residents of East York, was the plea that I made to the government members to please acknowledge that the residents of East York really want this transition bill to address a fundamental concern of lack of democracy and lack of fair representation.

You have an opportunity through the amendments I am putting forward to this bill to pass measures either on an interim basis or on a permanent basis that will bring about the kind of fair representation that the constituents of East York deserve. I understand you have a concern that perhaps the megacity council should be making these decisions, and in three years' time they can at the next election, but in the meantime it is important that the provincial government set this up in a way that is fair to begin with. One of the versions of the amendments I'm putting forward actually allows you to do this on a transitional basis for the first term of the megacity council, which I hope addresses those concerns that the minister has raised.

I look forward to working with you on committee to see these kinds of amendments passed, to ensure that the transition to the megacity, which I think is a fundamentally flawed idea in the first place, guarantees equitable representation for the residents of the borough of East York.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I'm pleased to add my comments to those of the members for Beaches-

Woodbine and Lawrence in response to the speech from my colleague from Scarborough Centre. I find it not at all surprising that the member for Lawrence would suggest that somehow in all of this discussion here today we should wrap it in the context of Who Does What and bus deregulation. I'm sure there are 20 or 30 other bills we passed that he would love to wrap this into and totally avoid the fact that Bill 148 is purely related to specific technical amendments.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would beg your assistance here. I believe we are responding to the comments from the member who made the speech and I see the member for Scarborough East, as always out of order, commenting on what another member had talked about in regard to the speech. I think the standing orders are clear. He is to respond to the comments made by the speaker and I would ask you to direct him so. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. The first thing we'll do is resume the hour and 20 minutes on the clock. Your point of order is well taken. I would address my remarks to the member for Scarborough East. Your comments should reflect the remarks made by the member for Scarborough Centre. Would you address your remarks to him and to the remarks in his debate. I think the Speaker has some flexibility in making this determination.

**1550**

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's certainly a flexibility that has been stretched to the breaking point.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, would you stop the clock for the member across the way? I want to be fairminded in this. The member across the way suggested to my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine that when we, the members of the opposition, debate a government bill, we are not to talk about amending a government bill in our debate. I'm wondering, is this a new rule the government wants to introduce, that members cannot move to amend a government bill or even speak about how to make a government bill better?

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** Or is the member again trying to make a travesty of democracy and trying to tell people we only can do things the Tory way?

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The clock resumes at the original time. The member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm assuming it's back up to the minute and 20.

**The Acting Speaker:** I've asked that the clock be reset.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you very much. I know they would love to monopolize the time in the House and demonstrate that kind of thuggery, but the bottom line is that Bill 148 is all about technical amendments.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. To the member for Scarborough East, I'd ask you to withdraw that comment. It is unparliamentary.

**Mr Gilchrist:** It's been used a number of times before, but if it offends you, Mr Speaker, I'll be pleased to withdraw that.

Bill 148 is purely and simply the technical amendments to Bill 103 — the technical additions to Bill 103; forgive me. The members opposite would want us to reopen the whole issue of the unification of the city. That's not going to happen. That's not part of this bill. As the member correctly pointed out, this is all about making sure that the services which currently operate —and as was wisely pointed out by one of our members from northern Ontario, people will have the certainty they still operate on January 1. We don't govern by looking in the rear-view mirror. We are making provision that the services will continue to be there for many, many years to come, that the people of Toronto will have that peace of mind and that the municipal candidates, including the NDP municipal candidates running in this election, will have that certainty. That won't be one of the fears they face.

The bottom line: This bill is purely technical, it's necessary and it's going to make Toronto an even greater city.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** The member for Scarborough Centre talks about cooperation from the opposition parties in the House. I have to say to him that I've heard from more sources than one that there's no one out there saying that this government is going too slow. I've yet to hear that. What I suggest to the member for Scarborough Centre is that he may want to take that back to his colleagues, to cabinet, to the decision-maker, the dictator, as he's been referred to a number of times by his own caucus members, being of course the Premier, Mike Harris, that people out there are saying: "Slow down. Let us get a grasp on what you're trying to do to us."

Let the people of the city that we talk about here today, and not only that but the people of the province, review what this government is doing rather than doing everything out of the corner office of Mike Harris. It's not until the Premier and the cabinet understand that that the member for Scarborough Centre will see some cooperation, not only from other members in this House, but also from community leaders, like AMO this week, that we deal with on a regular basis. Until he and his caucus colleagues, the Premier and the cabinet, get that through to themselves, they will not receive that cooperation he talked about in his remarks to the House here today.

He talked about needing democracy. I tell you, I hear more and more from my constituents, from people in this city, from constituents across the province that there is a definite lack of democracy in this House and regarding this particular piece of legislation. To the member, until he figures that out and gets that through, there will not be the cooperation he is looking for.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Newman:** I want to begin by thanking the member for Lawrence, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, the member for Kenora and of course the member for Scarborough East. I always enjoy listening to his speeches. I think it took three opportunities for him to try to get his

two minutes in with the opposition today and I thank him for really putting that effort forward.

The member for Lawrence spoke about, I believe, police services, that those will still be in effect on January 1, 1998. Well, so will the ambulance and transit if this bill is passed, and everything else that's included in this bill. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that 72% of all municipal spending within Metropolitan Toronto today is already for amalgamated services.

To my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I know her comments regarding representation had absolutely nothing to do with redistribution and where she might be running in the next election, so I appreciate her comments on that.

To the member for Kenora, we are listening to what people are saying. I think all members should take the time to listen. Just yesterday and today I met with some residents of the Kenora riding who happen to be in Toronto for a convention, and they're very much in favour of what the government is doing. I was pleased to — oh, the member is laughing.

**Mr Miclash:** Name names. Is that Craig Nuttall?

**Mr Newman:** Craig Nuttall is one of the people who is in town, along with several other people from the Kenora riding. Those residents of his riding are in favour of what the government is doing. They're in favour of the jobs that are being created, they're in favour of the lower taxes that are being seen across this province, the positive investment climate that's being put forward in this province. I guess anything looks fast compared to the Liberals and NDP from 1985 to 1995. The only thing they were quick to do was raise taxes.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lawrence.

**Mr Cordiano:** I am very happy to have this opportunity to speak to this piece of legislation, which is a fixer of the previous legislation on the megacity. It speaks to the reasons why we have this piece of legislation. The government is proceeding at such a rapid pace that it's getting things wrong. It's that simple: It's getting things all too often wrong.

There are consequences to this. We've tried to point out time and again to this government that the faster it moves, the more likely it will do serious damage to this province and its economy and its governing structures at the municipal level and at the school board level. What's the hurry? That's what people are asking now. It's reflected in the public opinion polls. They're asking why this government is moving with such rapidity.

It leads one to suspect the motives of the government. It leaves one with the impression that this government has something to hide and that it's running away from everyone. It wants to get all the difficult stuff accomplished and passed through this Legislature before anyone takes notice. So what do we have? It's quite obvious to those of us on this side of the House that the government's modus operandi is to pass legislation and ram it down the throats of everyone concerned before the public takes notice.

How did they accomplish this? To accomplish this, the government has seen fit to introduce new standing orders, new rules for this House, so that they can indeed move even faster.

In democracy today, it is critical for citizens to be even more informed than ever before. The amount of information that exists in our society, coming at people constantly, it's a barrage. We can't process that information quickly enough. That's what people are saying out there, "We need time to digest this, we need time to examine it and we also need time to be consulted," something this government is failing to do. So it leaves one with the impression that they have something to hide. What other conclusion can we come to? What other conclusion are people coming to?

It's hurting you in the polls. I'm not a great believer in polls; I don't follow them. It's sport.

**Mr Gilchrist:** If you had only had that in the leadership, it would have saved your fortune.

**1600**

**Mr Cordiano:** No, I don't think so. I think the results on the leadership prove that it was a very close race and it could have gone anywhere, notwithstanding that it took all night to figure that one out.

At the end of the day, it is indicative. What the poll does tell us and what is significant about these polls currently for the government is not where the parties are in the standings, but that people are genuinely concerned that they're not being consulted, that they're not being listened to and that this government is violating their democratic right to be consulted.

That's what's fundamental about the poll results currently. So I say to the government and to the backbenchers especially, it is your responsibility to ensure that this cabinet understands, that this executive understands, that the Premier understands. You on the back bench have the moral authority, by virtue of being elected by your constituents, to demonstrate to the Premier, to the cabinet, to those who are making decisions on your behalf, which you then have to go back to your own constituencies and sell, that they have a right to be heard.

It's the same thing in the way this government operates in its caucus. They're not informing you. I know the way governments undertake to make decisions. From time to time, power is more concentrated in the Premier's office than any of us would like. That's happening all too often under Mike Harris's jurisdiction. In his administration you're beginning to see that the corner office has even greater significance.

I'm going to quote from the member for Wentworth North. I like this quote because it demonstrates very aptly what I think is going on in the Premier's corner office: "This government is controlled by the Premier's office in conjunction with a bunch of kids who I say have a college or university degree in one hand and Machiavelli's Prince in the other, and not a whole lot in between."

**Ms Lankin:** It's a great quote.

**Mr Cordiano:** I think that's a great quote. It sums it all up. It indeed demonstrates the frustration that the back bench of this government is feeling today. You're not being consulted. You're not being told what's happening

within the executive ranks of the government. In fact, there's an inner cabinet that isn't even being told what's going on because it's the Premier's office that controls everything, and the more that happens, the more difficult it becomes for you.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** Tell me again what you've got against the Italian Machiavelli.

**Mr Cordiano:** A brilliant guy. It's the way your government is being operated. Even Tony Skarica is saying it's the way your government is being operated. It's Machiavelli's Prince, a bunch of whiz kids who are running around telling the Premier what to do. It's not even the Premier, he's suggesting. It's a bunch of whiz kids. How much more undemocratic can you get?

Bill 148 demonstrates and makes this case, that you are going too fast. You have to fix everything you introduce after the fact. You introduce a piece of legislation and then it requires numerous amendments. Bill 26 was such a piece of legislation. You went too fast, you didn't think it through and you had to come back and change it.

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** That's democracy.

**Mr Cordiano:** It's not democracy, because you introduce the legislation and then you think about the consequences after the fact. That's what we're seeing on the download. They have introduced legislation which will see the municipalities shoulder the burden of all these additional costs, and they're not sharing the information with municipalities. They're not disclosing what the true costs of that download will be. They're not disclosing information to the general public about how much property taxes will go up.

We see this time and again. Almost every piece of legislation that's introduced is flawed, and not only because we disagree with it in principle, but there are technical flaws in almost every piece of legislation this government has introduced. We're seeing amendment after amendment. We're seeing government then come back into this House and rush further amendments. They are not proceeding at a pace any reasonable citizen would deem to be democratic, and thus you hear the cries out there that this government appears to be undemocratic, unjustifiably dictatorial.

When it comes to megacity, there's another interesting poll out today — "Megacity to Cost More: Citizens." This is a poll that I believe was conducted by the transition team, hiring a bunch of students to do this poll. Some 4,000 Metro residents were surveyed and it found that "53% of those surveyed believed amalgamation — and the province's decision to make municipalities pay a greater share of social services costs — would lead to higher operating costs in the new city." Fifty-three per cent believe that. So you're not fooling anyone. You're not doing yourselves any favour by moving even quicker than you had planned.

As you hear the calls for slowdown, the calls for greater consultation with the public, you are beginning to realize that this is having an impact, which we warned you about, and in the end it will have dire consequences for the people of this city and, I believe, for municipalities across Ontario.

We will see that property taxpayers will be paying for the Mike Harris government's income tax cut. On the one hand you have cut income taxes, and you said you wouldn't close hospitals, and you said you wouldn't cut education, and you said that you could do that and at the same time balance the budget — magic. Now we're seeing that to accomplish that you're going to have to pass on costs to municipalities which will have to increase property taxes, or in the alternative, they'll have to cut vital services to their citizens.

That's not the kind of Ontario we want. That's not the kind of Ontario people have come to appreciate over the years. The previous speaker, the member for Scarborough Centre, talked about all these great services the people of Metropolitan Toronto want to see continue to be there for them in the future. These great services were provided as a result of the foresight that previous governments had — Conservative governments, I might add. They had great vision. They realized that to have viable cities, you had to have a quality of life that could be sustained and that would be the envy of the world. Yes, it did cost them money, there is no doubt about that, but it was sustainable.

What you are doing is undermining the ability of these municipalities to maintain that quality of life. Why is that the case? Because you're burdening them with additional social costs which weren't there before. No previous government ever conceived of the idea to pass on social costs to these municipalities, because we have paid for those services through the much more progressive system of taxation, income taxes, and there was a very good reason for doing so.

Income taxes provide a more stable base of funding, far more progressive, far more likely that those services would not be jeopardized during difficult economic times, in periods of recession. When we move to this new reality, you can see already what's going to happen. Social housing will be sacrificed. At some point in the future there won't be the necessary funding that will go into housing that has worked, and others have come to study to see how it does work.

The city of Toronto has a great number of housing projects that it put into place, and that's because we used the mixed income model of housing. This government doesn't agree with that. They have talked about bringing in shelter allowances. We haven't seen any discussion around that. We haven't seen the minister stand up and talk about that in any way, shape or form. He tells us he's lifting rent controls and that's going to spawn a building boom. At the end of the day, there will be no additional housing units on the market, social housing costs will fall on the shoulders of municipalities, they won't be able to sustain it, and when that is the reality, the private sector will move in and probably purchase these units at a huge discounted cost.

**1610**

Now this leads into the agenda for privatization of social housing because at some point those units will be discounted so much that, of course, any private sector developer would love to buy those units at half or more of the original cost for those units. A great deal, and I'm sure they'll make huge profits out of that. Again, what we're doing is sacrificing the kind of quality of life that we've had in this province in municipality after municipality. That's what this is all about. This is a technical bill, but it leads back to the original piece of legislation and it ties into megacity downloading and it ties into downloading right across the province. It's all about the same thing; it's all about this government finding ways to download on to municipalities those additional costs. And why? What's the impetus for this? What's driving this is their promise to cut income taxes.

But I think the people of this province are very smart indeed. They're not going to be fooled by this, and that is why the members of AMO, municipal leaders, have sounded the alarm. They're saying, "We can't handle these additional costs." They see what's coming down the road. They see that they're going to be forced to increase property taxes and/or cut vital services; services that have made Ontario what it is today, a real envy for the rest of the world, made Metropolitan Toronto the kind of city it is, so livable. What you're doing is undermining the ability to sustain that quality of life.

This technical bill, by the way, once again speaks to the government's need to move quickly, to expedite all of these matters so that, lo and behold, six or eight months from now when we're getting into a pre-election period, the government's going to coast. They're going to say, "We did all the tough stuff." The last year of its mandate the government is going to say: "Aren't we nice? Let's reconcile our differences with the municipalities. We're doing such wonderful things. There's nothing more on the agenda that we have to deal with that will upset anyone." That's their modus operandi. Get it over with. No one pays attention. Ram it through. The consequences won't be felt for several years down the road, well after the next provincial election, and hopefully the public won't take notice. But I say to you that the people of this province understand what's going on here and they'll make a judgement. They'll make a judgement whether this is acceptable or not.

They believed Mike Harris when he said in the last election campaign that he could figure out a way to solve our problems, that he could balance the budget and cut income taxes and not close hospitals and not cut education. But they had no idea that what he meant was that property taxes would inevitably have to go up to pay for those promises. That's what we're witnessing here in this Legislature, in the course of debate over Bill 148, megacity, and all of the other downloading issues that are attached to this. We're seeing the true costs of the original revolution gone mad.

The additional costs and who's going to pay for; it's not just about who does what, it's about who is going to pay for what. It's not about doing more for less; it's about doing less and getting less. Yes, getting less. You forget to mention that to people. In the end, it isn't going to cost any less because you're passing on those costs to municipalities.

What did the Premier say to municipalities? What did he say about municipalities? He said those that are well run won't see any cost increases, they can deal with it. On the one hand, he admits that there will be additional costs, and on the other, he says: "Don't worry, it's a wash. It's revenue-neutral." What are we to believe? What are the people of this province to believe? That it is revenue-neutral? That the download this government is imposing on municipalities is in fact revenue-neutral? Or that municipalities will have to absorb the additional costs and those that know how to manage their affairs properly will find ways to cut costs? No thanks to the province, which will mean inevitably that services are reduced. They'll let go staff, jobs will be lost, that's part of the equation. That's the reality of what this government is doing.

We all know, at the end of the day, there are no magical solutions. We're not talking about operating efficiencies here. This government is talking about eliminating vital services. It's not just about making things more efficient and it's not about paying less for those same services, because you can't do that. You can't run a government like a business. As far as providing vital services to people to whom it otherwise makes no economic sense to provide those services, how can you run that as a business? You can't. Those services need to be provided by the only provider available, and that's sometimes government. That's how you sustain a quality of life that we can all be proud of in this province. When you sacrifice that, you're making people who can't afford to pay for it pay for it even more. You're saying, "Too bad, if you can't afford it, you won't get it." That's not acceptable in Ontario today.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I am pleased to comment on the 20-minute speech from the member for Lawrence on the amount of cutbacks and the effect that the son-of-megacity bill is going to have. We know that the transition team is demanding that they lay off or fire the equivalent of $450 million worth of staff in the new megacity. We know that the costs are going to be an additional $200 million in property taxes. We know that when they asked the district health council or the board of health to reduce the cost of money they spend on the street kids and the homeless people, the board of health has just told them simply to get lost.

This is an addition to the megacity bill that was dealt with here that 76.3% of the population voted against. They didn't want it. They didn't want megacity. They don't want Bill 148, although they know that when you have a Conservative majority and the bully tactics that they're using, some people in my riding are saying, "Why does Mike Harris hate the people in this province so much that he's going to punish them and he's going to take away a lot of the benefits and he's going to force property taxes up right across the province?"

We know he's allowing gas prices to go up in northern Ontario and right across the province. He's also allowing Ernie Eves to raise taxes on every single car in northern Ontario. The NDP government took off the registration fees in northern Ontario because of the high price of gasoline and now, on September 1, Mike Harris is going to put a fee back on, a tax on every single vehicle in northern Ontario. This is very similar to what's happening with megacity and Bill 148, which is a continuation of the megacity bully tactics that are being used in this House.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm intrigued that "thuggery" is out of order but "bully" continues to be accepted. It seems to me those two terms are synonymous, but I'll restrict my comments to the speech from the member for Lawrence and thank him for his comments on this issue. He's posed a number of questions.

First off, what's the rush? Well, it's fairly obvious that given that the city of Toronto comes into force on January 1, the bill handling all of the issues of pensions, of assets, of liabilities, of who owns what, and making sure those services continue to be delivered on January 1, clearly that's the rush. It's not that great a rush, but we have to move this thing forward this session.

There's no more time for further scrutiny and debate. We already held that debate. You'll recall we had 300 hours of public hearings on the issue of the amalgamation, and many people brought forward precisely the issues that we're dealing with now in these technical amendments. They talked about what would happen to the zoo and what would happen to the Guild Inn and what would happen to the TTC. Various employees came forward and said, "What will happen to my pension?" It's all spelled out in very clear detail.

**1620**

I am encouraged that one more opposition speaker has stood in their place and not found fault with a single clause, not found fault with a single word in this bill. No doubt that will fuel our belief that this bill can proceed in an expeditious fashion.

You made one point that must be challenged. You said that no previous government has talked about sharing the responsibility for social costs with municipalities. From day one, welfare has involved the municipalities, but it also involved the federal government and your federal Liberal friends stopped paying the 20%. They downloaded it to the province many years ago. We had to handle that the same way we're handling over $2 billion in downloading in health care costs, downloading of the former costs of transportation. We're biting the bullet on all of those things.

This bill is technical. It has nothing to do with Who Does What. It has to do with making the city of Toronto even greater.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Lawrence. There are some times in this House when I hear comments about, "Someone downloaded to me, so therefore we can download on." It reminds me of families who use those excuses about, "This is what my dad did, so this is what I'm going to do."

I think the member for Lawrence is absolutely right when he ties the issue of this bill together with what's happening in terms of the downloading to municipalities. At this point in time, I would say, it has to be considered in the same light. The reason for that is not that the bills are inextricably linked, but the effects of the bills are.

The member for Lawrence says this is being rushed. On the megacity bill, which you all know I opposed, but now that we've got it, we've got to have transition, our caucus did come forward with what we thought was a very reasonable proposal to try and work through this over the course of a year in terms of shaping it and have the municipal elections and the effect of whatever the result of amalgamation would have been, with a better process, come into effect in a year's time. You would have had the appropriate time to deal with all of the administrative and technical detail as well.

The member points out that not all the detail is here. I actually agree with him. I think others who say it's here are wrong. Much of that detail is left to regulation, and we have yet to see what those regulations will provide. So I think there is good reason for these issues to be linked together and I agree with the member for Lawrence.

One aspect which I would have hoped the member for Lawrence would have picked up would have been a criticism of the composition of the new megacity council and the fact that the borough of East York is unfairly represented in that. There is an opportunity to address that as we go through the committee hearings. It is an amendment that I will be putting forward and I hope that my colleague from Lawrence might see fit to throw his support, as well as his caucus support, behind that.

**Mr Newman:** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Lawrence and his comments today. I know he mentioned rushing through a bill. Bill 148 is the second stage of Bill 103. We said right from the start there would be a second bill to follow up Bill 103, so it's a surprise to no one. Maybe to the member for Lawrence it is, I don't know, but I think the rest of us knew there was a follow-up bill coming. In fact, I quote Minister Leach:

"This legislation is necessary from an administrative and technical point of view to ensure that the new city council has the authority to continue to carry out routine duties when the new city comes into effect on January 1, 1998."

As some members have said, it's a simple bill but it may have consequences beyond that. I believe it's just a technical bill that should be passed quickly so we can get on to other pieces of legislation that the people of Ontario want to have dealt with.

I wonder how the member could be against a bill that ensures that there's one public health board, that there's one library board, that there's one historical board, that there's one single parking authority within the new city of Toronto, and especially for employees and retirees of the existing municipalities, that their pensions and their benefits would be protected. I think that's something that all

members of the Legislature would want to see happen. I know we want to see that happen and I would urge the member for Lawrence to do the same.

I think all the residents of the new city of Toronto have the right to know that on January 1, 1998, when the new city comes into effect, there is a smooth and orderly transition to this new city and there's not a disruption or interruption in services that they receive today.

**Mr Cordiano:** Let me just comment about what I've heard backbenchers of the government say: that they'll go along with whatever the minister is proposing any time because they're backbenchers of the government. They haven't stopped to question why this bill was necessary in the first place. The point I made earlier was that Bill 148 is in fact a necessity because of Bill 103 and because of the rush to download on to municipalities all of the additional services and burdens that they will now face.

Bill 148 is a technical bill, but it exists, it's made necessary, because of the megacity being imposed on the people of this great Metropolitan Toronto and as a result of the downloading that's going on. You're going to continue to have these services; of course we support that. But we don't support the way in which you brought in this legislation. We did not support this legislation. It's fundamentally wrong, it's fundamentally flawed. You're trying to fix it now.

We're saying to you, time and again you're doing this. You bring in pieces of legislation which you subsequently have to fix. That's what Bill 148 is all about. It's fixing Bill 103, the megacity legislation. Bill 148 is a necessity because of 103 having gone wrong. That's what people are telling you out there. The public is telling you, "Take the time to consider what we're saying, consult with us." And it doesn't mean just consulting over a two-week period of time. My God, the changes you're proposing are absolutely unprecedented. This is not something you can just sweep under the rug and hope it goes away. Many people will be affected by it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak on Bill 148, but I would like to observe that I think the government has failed once again to keep quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** Speaker, a quorum is now present.

**Mrs Boyd:** I am happy to have an opportunity to speak on Bill 148 because it is part of a process that has been going on in this place and it is an extraordinarily important part of that process, both in terms of its implications and in terms of its substance.

The bill itself, of course, as the members of the government side have said, lays out a lot of the technicalities around the transfer of responsibilities from six municipalities to the larger municipality, which they have created and forced upon the people of Metropolitan Toronto.

**1630**

I find it rather offensive, as a member in this place, that there are members on the government side who suggest there's nothing to talk about in this bill. I find it rather offensive that the member for Scarborough Centre, the member for Scarborough East, continually talk about the debate on this bill being held up in this House. This is part of the problem we have with democracy in this province.

The problem we have is that the government thinks what we do in this Legislature, thinks that our representation of the views of those who are opposed to what the government is doing, is not important, that what we need to do is rush towards this abyss that this government is rapidly approaching — like lemmings, I might say — and not bring to this place and to the public scrutiny the real concerns we have about what they are doing.

They would be happy if we talked about just the technicalities of this bill that we do approve of. Several of our members have expressed relief and pleasure around some of the transitional phases, particularly around the planning process and in some cases around the continuation of the bylaws and the resolutions, for example, of public health boards. We have been very clear that we are not totally opposed to the detail of this bill, as it exists.

This bill, first, did not need to happen if the government had not rushed so fast with its megacity bill that it didn't have all these pieces in place in the first place, and second, this government was so inattentive to the legislative process that it lost the ability to make regulations under the megacity bill because to save themselves from the embarrassment of the Cafon Court debacle they had to withdraw the whole section of the bill that talked about regulation-making powers. That's the reality.

This bill is a necessary follow-on from the chaos this government created with the megacity bill. Of course it's a necessary follow-on, but the reality is it must be seen within the context of the chaos this government is creating all over this province with all its municipalities. There are those who would say, "Why would the member for London or Cochrane or Nickel Belt be speaking about a bill that is a technical bill around the city of Metropolitan Toronto?

There's a very good reason. The citizens in my community know that what this government began with Bill 26, has continued with the megacity situation, has now put into place with Bill 152 with the download, and with this bill, Bill 148, could happen to any municipality, and indeed as Chatham-Kent will tell you, has happened to them.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Rave reviews.

**Mrs Boyd:** Not rave reviews. The parliamentary assistant says with rave reviews. He obviously doesn't read the press that I read from southwestern Ontario, and he clearly doesn't speak to the politicians in Chatham-Kent who are very concerned about the way this government has imposed, upon that community, a government they did not consent to.

This is the very basis of democracy, that there has to be consent of the governed. One of the problems we have

with this whole megacity mess is that this government is imposing the city of Toronto through its act without the consent of the governed, and it is laying up for itself in the future a great deal of difficulty.

There are those all over the province who may from time to time have felt some of the resentment that is so patently expressed by so many of the Conservative members towards Metropolitan Toronto, towards the services Metropolitan Toronto has created and has been prepared to pay for through its tax base, and there are some of those people in my community. But while they might say they are resentful of the fact that the tax base in Metropolitan Toronto has allowed for the creation and the delivery of this level of service, they do not believe the level of service should be dropped, dropped because of the kind of dictatorial actions this government has taken, coupled with the download it is creating.

The people of Ontario are basically fair people, and while there is no doubt that people all over this province have looked with some envy at the services Metropolitan Toronto has created and the services the six constituent cities of Metropolitan Toronto have created, they look with the envy of wishing they could provide the same kind of services and knowing that they don't have the same kind of resources to do so. They don't believe the lowest common denominator ought to be the rule. Quite frankly, Bill 148 and the transition team that is in place, and is urging on Metropolitan Toronto a $450-million reduction in funding of services for the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto, is urging a dropping to the lowest common denominator.

It has always been the practice in Ontario, as services have gradually evolved, to try and bring communities that do not have as high a level of service up to the level of service that's offered in other places. This is the first government in history that has taken a position that it wants to drive down the level and the quality of services — publicly funded, publicly delivered services. That is very clearly the objective of this bill and the transition team that has been put in place in Metropolitan Toronto.

The envy that's being expressed by the members of this government is not the healthy envy of those who want to emulate the services Metropolitan Toronto has created; it is an unhealthy envy of those who do not think the citizens deserve that quality or level of service. So in the guise of technicalities there are in fact nails in the coffin of the public services that have been created in this beautiful city.

It will go down in history as a very sad occasion that the actions of this government have inexorably driven down the kind of expectations people can have of the community in which they live, and that increasingly those services that are eroded by the actions of this government will be replaced only for those who can afford to replace them through fees for service. Mr Ford, the member for Etobicoke-Humber, nodded his head and confirmed that this is indeed the intention of the government.

The reality of the actions that are happening in this bill is that this bill lays out in very great detail the destruction of many of the things that have made Toronto great. All of us of course want to have an opportunity to speak to this bill and to expose the fact that this is only one piece in a very complex — I was going to say "scheme."

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Go ahead.

**Mrs Boyd:** Do you think I should? All right — scheme by this government to erode the best services that are available in the province so it will be easier to convince municipalities all over this province that, as the download happens, it's okay to withdraw services. That's what it's all about. As long as the example of the services offered by the city of Toronto or the city of North York are there as examples of best practices, best services, and actually delivered to people in the province of Ontario, others will seek equity with those services.

**1640**

It was absolutely necessary for this government to destroy the municipalities in the city of Metropolitan Toronto if it was going to succeed in its download scheme, absolutely necessary, because they need the example of: "Well, Toronto was able to consolidate everything in this way. They were able to put on to the taxpayer a lot of the costs that used to be raised through taxes. They were able to get the community interests that have driven public policy in the various constituent parts of Metropolitan Toronto, they have been able to water those down and they have been able to drive the people of Metropolitan Toronto to the lowest common denominator."

That's the whole purpose of the exercise. It's a very serious problem for those not only who live in Metropolitan Toronto, and of course to an extent all of us have a stake in that because all of us work within the city of Metropolitan Toronto and all of us experience this city every day. We should be deeply concerned about the end effect. We should be deeply concerned about the fact that what has made us great, what attracted the police association, for example, to hold its convention for 15,000 people in Toronto in the upcoming years, is the fact that we have safe streets, we have clean streets, that we have a city that operates in a smooth way, that has a residential core, that isn't the kind of devastated shell that a city like Detroit is. Of course the admiration of the world has been expressed again and again about this being the best city in the world.

What is this government's objective? Obviously their objective is to say: "That's not a good thing. We have to find a way to make it worse, because unless we make it worse, we're not going to be able to drive down the standards and the kinds of communities that people legitimately expect in this province, by shifting the tax burden to such an extent that municipalities are forced to withdraw from areas of service and to water down the kinds of services that we have come to expect."

There are, as we have said, many reasons why the individual sections of this bill are necessary to ensure a transition for this change, no question about that, but if you fundamentally disagree with the change, if you fundamentally believe that it is not appropriate for a government to impose a whole form of government on a population

that clearly has in the large majority rejected that, then that is a really serious problem.

There are things that could have been included in Bill 148 that would have resolved some of the very worst problems with the megacity. The most obvious one is the one that my colleague from Beaches-Woodbine brings up again and again, and that is the inequitable representation for the people of East York. I grew up part of my life in Leaside, which is now part of East York, and I believe very strongly that the people of East York deserve the same kind of representation under this megacity, at least the same representation, as the other people in this great city, and yet they don't have that under the original legislation.

The government had an opportunity to change that. The government was aware of this, the representations were made. The government could have changed that very serious error in this bill, but they chose not to. It is really important as we debate this bill to realize that this was an opportunity to make a substantive change that would have given some kind of credibility, not much but some, to the claims that the government tries to make about simply trying to make things better.

There is no citizen in this democratic province who truly believes that a lack of representation, a reduction of representation to the extent that has happened in the megacity, could ever be a good thing. But there is certainly not one citizen in East York who believes that they should have been particularly disadvantaged in the area of representation.

I sincerely hope that the government members are prepared to accept the amendments that will be put forward by the member for Beaches-Woodbine to ensure that the citizens of East York are not even further disadvantaged than all the rest of the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto as a result of the actions of this government. At the very least, if this government has any care about the principles of democracy, we should see that happen.

Speaker after speaker will, I'm sure, be talking about the fact that this bill is not here in isolation and that the reason it needs discussion is that it needs to be put into the context of the ongoing actions of the government. Had the government allowed a referendum and had that referendum indicated that they were going in the right direction with their ideas around Metropolitan Toronto, a bill that put into effect those recommendations of the population of Metropolitan Toronto would not have been contentious. That's quite true. But for members of the government to try to suggest that an implementation bill is merely a housekeeping bill when it actually carries out the implementation of a policy, of a piece of legislation that is opposed so dramatically by people in this area, they're simply dreaming in Technicolor.

It is not appropriate and we would not be doing our job as representatives of the opposition if we did not point out that the biggest flaw in Bill 148 is the way it fits into this mosaic that the government is creating, this mosaic of a driving down of services, of demeaning the whole idea that we group together as communities, we pool the resources we have to ensure that all the citizens of our community enjoy services, not just the citizens who can afford to pay out the dollar for each bag of garbage, not just the citizens who can afford to have private policing in gated communities, but all the citizens.

That's the whole principle behind taxes. When I hear this government talk about how taxes are evil and they are the white knights because they're destroying taxes and they're lowering taxes, we have to remember that we as a community decided that the way to provide services equitably was to pool our resources through a scheme of taxation, not to require that those with few resources be able to purchase their services on the same basis as those with many.

You will hear us again and again on Bill 148 talking about it as a consequence of the overall ideology of this government, with which we do not agree and which we will continue to oppose.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Gilchrist:** If I may respond to the points put forward by the member for London Centre, I appreciate her comments and I would not want them to go unchallenged. Her comments, particularly the early part of her address, suggested again the common litany that comes from the other side that our government is not consulting, that we're not listening. Then later in her own presentation she commented about the fact that certain issues had changed. Clearly, the recognition of the number of councillors, the ability to respect the existing city boundaries for the community councils — any number of changes were made as a result of the 300 hours of public hearings. I would contrast that to the zero hours of public hearings that were given to the social contract.

**1650**

The bottom line, just to remind people who may not have caught these numbers yesterday, is that last year our government held a total of 720 hours of public hearings. The record year for the NDP was 1994, when they held 689 hours of public hearings. The most the Liberals did was 1989, when they held only 529 hours of hearings. In other words, our government gave 200 hours more.

**Ms Lankin:** On how many bills?

**Mr Gilchrist:** The member opposite asked about the number of bills. That's very interesting. In 1996, the PCs passed only 10 bills.

**Ms Lankin:** No. The years you just cited.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Mr Gilchrist:** In 1994 — you're right, you need the second bit of information — 689 hours and you passed 31 bills. That's only 20 hours each. But the Liberals hold the record: 529 hours of hearings, and you know what? If you want to talk about ramming things through, if you want to talk about being dictatorial, if you want to talk about lack of accountability, they rammed through 93 bills in 1989 — nine times more than we did — at an average of five hours per bill. We averaged over 70 hours. That's ac-

countability, that's consulting. You can spin the tale, but the facts speak otherwise.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I'd also like to compliment the member for London Centre for her well-expressed presentation of the contents of both Bill 103 and Bill 148. Even though she's not a member from the Metro area, she has demonstrated to the House that she is well familiar with not only the contents of both bills but how they affect the people of Metropolitan Toronto. I think she has above all exposed the flaws in Bill 148 as it applies to the context of the downloading on the local municipalities.

What she has been saying is that the contents of the bills, which have various public hearings and are then brought back into the house — while the government members on the committee listened to hundreds, perhaps thousands of people, in the end the bill comes out exactly as originally introduced. Worst of all, what the government has failed to recognize during that particular process is that whatever amendments or different bills they brought in did not make any improvements on the bill whatsoever.

The member needs to be congratulated for exposing those aspects of the bill that do not reflect the will of the people at public hearing after public hearing. They said: "We want to have input. This is our city, this is our neighbourhood. We want to have a say. Please listen to us." I have to say, regrettably, it shows the government has shown contempt for democracy in not listening to the people.

**Mr Laughren:** I want to respond briefly to the comments made by the member for London Centre. I think she made some central points. I know that in her remarks she didn't identify the members particularly, but when members of the government express amazement that the opposition would be objecting to a government bill, it always seems strange to me that they don't seem to understand what the role of the opposition is, perhaps because they have never been in opposition. It's not their fault, but it's a fact of life.

When the member for London Centre talks about this bill flowing from Bill 103, the megacity bill, you can hardly expect us to stand in our place and applaud you for bringing in this bill which flows from the megacity bill.

As well, I very much appreciated the comments of the member for London Centre on the whole issue of East York. A place like East York can get lost in a debate such as this because of its relatively small size compared to other municipalities.

I haven't talked to government members about the amendments that are going to be proposed by the member for Beaches-Woodbine, but I suspect they would say, "If you change the representation to be more in keeping with what East York or the member for Beaches-Woodbine want, then East York will be over-represented." That would be the argument I suspect they would come back with. I would say to them, think about it for a moment. This is an existing entity now, and they will feel that what's happening to them is also happening to the other municipalities, but it's happening in spades to that little municipality of East York. I think the government should be listening to the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Mr Newman:** I'm pleased to rise and respond to the member for London Centre's speech today on Bill 148. I think she spoke about the process of Bill 103 and Bill 148 and spoke about the government's ideology. I thought she might have talked more about the bill in particular and how it would allow the Toronto Transit Commission, the Metropolitan Toronto Zoo, which is located within the city of Scarborough, the Hummingbird Centre and Exhibition Place, among other things, to continue, and that we might have one single public board of health and one single library board within the new city of Toronto, one historical board and only one parking authority for this new city.

But Bill 148, or an overwhelming majority of it, deals with moving the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act, the City of Scarborough Act, the Borough of East York Act, the City of Etobicoke Act, the City of Toronto Act, the City of York Act, the City of North York Act into this new Bill 148, the City of Toronto Act (No. 2). I know many members have said it's a housekeeping bill, a technical bill, and it is. Speaker, you might be interested to hear that the member for Riverdale said it was a simple bill but it could have some consequences. I just wanted everyone to know that's what she said. I might have said something a little different to that.

I really believe that what this bill does is ensure that the workers of the municipalities, the retirees who have earned their pensions, who have paid into their pensions over the number of years they have contributed to make our city a great place, will continue to receive those pension benefits. I think that's very important. To vote against this bill would be to vote against the workers, their pensions, the retirees and all the work they have put in to making our city a great place.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response, the member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** I'd like to thank the members for Scarborough East, Yorkview, Nickel Belt and Scarborough Centre for their comments. The reality is that in our debate we obviously see things quite differently, and that's the purpose of this debate. The purpose of debate is to try and expose within pieces of legislation their impact, their consequences. Obviously, given the differences between the government's and our position on the issue of the megacity, it is not surprising that we interpret things in different ways. That's what debate is all about.

It's important to debate that, because what happens as we debate on an issue of such controversy is that those in the communities affected get an opportunity to understand what the issues are, whether they be the explicit issues that the member for Scarborough Centre would like to concentrate on solely or whether it's the whole implication of how a bill fits into a government agenda. Our job as opposition is to do both those things.

I would point out to the member for Scarborough Centre that the member for Beaches-Woodbine and the member for Dovercourt have done a great deal of discussion about the very details of the bill he is so concerned about.

I can understand why he is exercised that others also want to look at the very real way in which the implications and consequences of this bill affect not only the people of Metropolitan Toronto but the rest of the province. However, as the representative for London Centre, that's part of my obligation to my constituents and part of my obligation to constituents in ridings which surround me who do not have a voice because all of the government members simply say "Yes, yes, yes," to Mike Harris.

**Mr Laughren:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I'm not sure there's a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, could you check if there is a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**Mrs Boyd:** Steve just walked through the door.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Further debate.

**1700**

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's interesting, the previous Minister of Finance was having a little trouble adding up to 20.

I was just listening to the previous two members, the member for Lawrence and the member for London Centre, making a lot of reference to Bill 103 rather than to Bill 148 and maybe just in my opening I could make some reference similarly to 103.

For me, living outside of Toronto, Toronto was always basically the same size as what Metro Toronto is. I didn't think in terms of six cities encompassed in there. We could go through the various names, Etobicoke and the various Yorks and Scarborough etc, but to me that was always Toronto.

That's what the sign says just outside of Cobourg. It says Toronto so many kilometres to the west. As I travel west and go across the Rouge, I'm now in Toronto, and if I keep going west and sort of go by the airport, I'm out of Toronto. I think that's the way most people in Ontario really think of Toronto and that's really what Bill 103 is all about, making that one city.

I had the good fortune to live in Indonesia for a year and they really know Toronto far better than they know Ontario or maybe, for that matter, Canada. Toronto is well known and they certainly don't think of it in terms of six cities or some small section in the middle of Metropolitan Toronto. They think of it as one city in total.

It was interesting that the member for Lawrence made reference to Toronto being such a great city. His riding being totally in North York, it was almost a slight for him to be saying it that way, when in fact he wasn't talking about his own constituents, he was talking about others.

The member for London Centre was saying we're not consulting, not responding. I think it's interesting how many amendments we did bring in on Bill 103. We responded to the concerns about the old city boundaries and that was part of what was brought in as a response to the politicians, as a response to the public. We responded to the concerns of 44 representatives from the new Toronto area. Again, it was in response to consultations and the many, many hours of hearings that the member for Scarborough East made reference to. I thought originally it was quite an ideal situation whereby there would be two municipal politicians representing each federal-provincial riding in the Toronto area, but obviously that good idea was not thought to be so great. Something else was suggested and we responded to that, and now there's concern over it.

It's also interesting to note that a previous leader of the Liberal Party some 35 years ago — I'd just like to make some comments here about the quote from John Wintermeyer, who was the leader of the Ontario Liberal Party back in 1962. Of course, 1962 was a great year. That happened to be the year that I graduated as a veterinarian and started to practise. I have many fond memories of that year.

Wintermeyer said: "There's no logical solution for Metropolitan Toronto other than total amalgamation. The metropolitan system of government is not the final solution. It is the step in between." That was in the Toronto Telegram, August 4, 1962. It appears that the Liberal Party of Ontario was more insightful 35 years ago than it is right now.

This bill, Bill 148, is really about putting the technical details in place. The previous government talked a lot about disentanglement. We're talking about Who Does What and it's really working on some of the same kinds of problems: duplication, overlap, municipalities having certain roles and the provincial government having certain roles. I'm not too sure what put them off the trail or why they gave up or why they quit, whether it was the social contract that bothered them. They had overspent and then they ran into trouble and had to do something. They introduced the social contract and disentanglement got off the rails. I give them full marks for addressing disentanglement, but they didn't carry it through. They seemed to get hung up, possibly mired in the details and weren't able to make it fly or were uncomfortable with trying to make it fly.

I like to think of the quote from Friedrich Engels. He said that one ounce of action is worth a pound of theory. What is going on is the present government is doing lots of action. We'll certainly never be criticized for inaction. We're doing our thing. However, the previous government may have got hung up on theory and never did quite get around to putting things in place. That was most unfortunate.

What we need is a goal, to get a goal established that will work out how we're going to do things and eliminate that kind of duplication and overlap. This is just one of those bills that is helping. There are many other bills that are part and parcel of doing this particular thing. Bill 148 is all about good management and a smooth transition as we move from the six cities to having one city collectively under one political roof, so to speak.

Yes, this is preparation for major change, and indeed it is major change. When you have major change like that, it's a bit disrupting to people. When that is occurring, you need to have a plan in place. This is a strategic plan to make this good transition happen in a very orderly fashion. You might refer to this as something like a roadmap that's

going to guide and direct and get us through some of these troubled times as we move into this change and getting the new city going the way it should.

I'd like to point out that this bill is going to address some of the inequities that are presently in this great city, Toronto the Good. The member for Riverdale very kindly pointed that out last night. She was talking about poor kids and having to pay for swimming and going to pools. I can tell you that in Scarborough they do have to pay to go swimming in the pools. We move over to, say, areas like Beaches-Woodbine or Toronto and the swimming happens to be free. That's hardly a consistent thing across the city. You can use all kinds of examples.

This just happens to be one where the rich and disadvantaged — there is a difference in some places. There isn't equality. With one municipal government, it can be looked at in a uniform system, in a uniform way and addressed. Granted they can have differentials in different parts of the city, but that will be up to a common government. They may want to look at a voucher system or whatever.

Right now in the present city of Toronto there are very generous social programs that it's my understanding have not been available in some of the other cities that are around Toronto. This has created a bit of a magnetic effect, I understand; again, more inequality. With a joint city that stretches all across the present Metropolitan area some of these inequalities can be addressed, can be recognized and maybe we'll have far less, and that should be what the third party is always talking about. They should be very supportive and quite enthused.

On some of the things that are going to be carried out with this new city, there are some concerns. Really this is technical, making sure that everything happens afterwards. The Toronto Transit Commission will operate. Exhibition Place, Metro zoo, Hummingbird Centre, the Guild Inn, ambulance service and so forth will all be covered once we pass January 1, 1998. My friend a few minutes ago mentioned the interest the third party must have in connection with the pensions and benefits of some 57,000 employees in the Metro Toronto area. Because of this bill, those kinds of things will be consistently carried out.

Some see things and say, "Why?" Winners dream things that never were and say, "Why not?" The negativity of the opposition party and the third party is really starting to wear pretty thin. The people of Ontario are looking for a government that will give them confidence, looking for a government with a vision and looking for a government that will produce change that will be better.

We are offering that kind of vision. We're offering change for the better and we're offering that this will be a better city in the future, that it will be a great province, it'll be one of the best nations in the world. We'll live up to the United Nations' evaluation that we have had in the last few years and we'll guarantee to continue with it.

**1710**

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Sergio:** I've enjoyed very much indeed the presentation by the member for Northumberland. I think he sounded very positive. I have to say that it's not that he didn't express some of the feelings as we see it as members from Metro or as the people from Metro expressed it during the public hearings, but as a member out of Metro, I think he has done very well and he has a good handle on some of the issues that affect the people of Metropolitan Toronto. When the member talks about making a better province or a better city, I think the people want exactly that.

Unfortunately, what is happening is the way we see it in Metropolitan Toronto, and this comes not only from the opposition, not from some individual or individual groups, not from members related to a labour group; it comes from strong members of the Conservative Party. They are saying: "This is not going to work. We want to have a say. We want to make sure that the process involves us, that we are going to be affected. We want to have our voices heard. We want to make sure taxes will not skyrocket, as everybody has been saying. We want to make sure the services we enjoy now will not disappear."

They have been saying that the representation we now enjoy will not be further away from the local communities. This is what is missing in the bill. I can appreciate the member saying, "We want to make this work and work for the better and for this to be the biggest city, the best province, and maintain the quality of life we now have." The problem is, while I concur with the member, the expectations of the people do not share those feelings, because of two things: When you cut the funds, you've got to either raise taxes or lower the services.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm pleased to be able to respond to the member for Northumberland. Unlike the member for Yorkview, I actually don't agree that the member for Northumberland displays an intimate knowledge of the metropolitan area of Toronto. In fact, I think he admitted it right up front when he said, "I'm someone from outside of Toronto and when I come here it's sort of like" — you know, it's all Toronto and the various Yorks. Let me tell you, the folks from East York, the folks from the cities of York and North York will not appreciate hearing a Conservative member refer to them as "the various Yorks."

But I think it's because you don't live in Toronto and haven't experienced the life of Metropolitan Toronto and the constituent communities that you would say something like that. In fact those communities, those cities, have a life and a vitality and a culture unto themselves that has been very important to those communities and remains important. But that is the debate, as you pointed out, under the megacity bill and you have passed that and you have moved on.

The question is now, is there a way in which some of the problems that have been created can be addressed? I will come back to the point with respect to the borough of East York, a community that had its own culture, that had its own local governance, that seeks to ensure that the community council that you put in place with respect to Bill 103 will be a meaningful and effective vehicle for

them to maintain some sense of local governance. In that respect, I'm hopeful that the member for Northumberland and his colleagues will give every consideration to the possibility of supporting the amendments I bring forward under this bill.

The one other point that I wanted to raise — I understand when the member says he would like to see some equity in terms of accessibility to parks and recreation, for example, and some equity across the various municipalities. But one of the things you fail to recognize is that in the city of Toronto, for example, the inner city core, the poverty that's there, those policies are different than Scarborough and it's those differences that must be recognized.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to my colleague from Northumberland. Unlike the previous speaker, I'm not going to make condescending comments about the fact that he doesn't happen to live in Toronto. The fact of the matter is that no such reference was made after the member for London Centre made her comments. It is totally inappropriate to suggest that just because we all don't live in 130 different ridings we can't pass judgement on those things. In fact, the members opposite vilify us often for having no members in the north, and now they suggest that you actually have to live somewhere in Toronto to be able to deal with that. By that criteria, we could only deal, each of us, with our own local municipalities.

She then goes on to quite condescendingly suggest — and my colleague here said just the opposite — that the new municipal councillors in this bill will be entrusted with a seamless transition of the pensions, of the assets and the liabilities and, yes, the challenge of taking a very different vision of social issues that have been adopted by the city of Toronto and the city of Scarborough and other parts of the current Metropolitan Toronto and melding that over the long term into a consistent, cohesive attempt to address social problems.

To suggest that the city of Scarborough has no poverty, to suggest that the people in Scarborough somehow are deserving of different treatment and that's why pools are free in Toronto and not in Scarborough, I think demonstrates the true lack of awareness of what's going on in the city of Toronto. Far too often it has been parochialism, it has been insular thinking, it has been vote buying, it has been pandering to the electorate that has generated the sort of decisions that have created these differences in municipal service delivery today.

The bottom line is the city now will have the opportunity to put together a common vision of how to best deal with all the services. This bill is purely technical. This bill addresses the potential of this great city and allows us to ensure the greatest city in the world becomes greater yet.

**Mrs Boyd:** I want to thank my Liberal colleagues for allowing me to give a comment in response to the diatribe I've just listened to by the member for Scarborough East, who of course was addressing issues in the comments to the speaker's comments rather than the speaker's comments themselves.

I would like to say, as a member who represents people who do not live in Toronto, that my constituents understand there are constituent parts to Toronto. My city went through a painful annexation and knows what it is like to lose their identity, not once, but over a period of time in an evolutionary way. My constituents understand the very strong feeling that is happening among citizens in Toronto because their identity is being stripped away by a government against their will with very little discussion.

My constituents know that because the last annexation that happened in London happened over a period of 11 years — 11 years of various consultation, 11 years of efforts to try and come to a consensus, 11 years of trying to work through the details that would try to maintain some of the identities and try and live with some of the consequences.

It is true that our government, after 11 years, did put a fact-finder in, did have a recommendation and did pass a bill. But we took it out to hearings, we tried to listen to what was going on and most of all, we understood the pain and the difficulty of people in places like Lambeth, that they were losing what they called their identity.

Quite frankly, the member for Northumberland, in his comments this afternoon, will have enraged thousands of people in the city of Toronto by his lack of understanding.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the chance to have a couple of minutes' response to the various comments that have been made. Thank you to the members for Yorkview, Beaches-Woodbine and London Centre for their comments, and particularly to my fellow member from Scarborough East for his very kind comments and response.

**Interjection:** As always.

**Mr Galt:** As always.

The member for Yorkview made reference to taxes and concerns about taxes going up afterwards. I am surprised that a Liberal would express a concern over tax increases. I thought they stood for tax increases. I can tell you, with all things being equal, it will be revenue-neutral, but we can't control who is going to get elected. If municipally you elect a lot of people who like to spend money, like those in the Liberal ranks, then of course the taxes will go up. If they like to spend, of course their taxes will go up.

**1720**

We see the Liberal philosophy here day in and day out, whether it's provincial or federal. They're opposed to tax cuts, they're opposed to a balanced budget and they support spending. Every time they stand up they want us to spend more and more on this, that and the other thing. I don't follow it at all.

The member for Beaches-Woodbine made reference to the fact that I don't live in Toronto. I'm neither proud of that nor do I find it upsetting or a shame. I think Toronto is a great city, and where Toronto goes, Ontario goes. It's very important to people in rural Ontario to support and ensure that Toronto is a strong, vibrant city. That's why I'm concerned and the member for London Centre who lives outside of Toronto is concerned as well. But we also recognize that if Toronto is doing well, Ontario is doing

well, and if Ontario, by the way, is doing well, Canada is doing well. We've often talked about Ontario being the engine that drives Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Sergio:** I am pleased to delve into the debate on Bill 148, but before I go into the business of discussing Bill 148, I would like to say one particular thing. Late last night, just before we were about to adjourn, due to the effects of a long day, I called for a quorum just prior to 9:30. That was done very voluntarily, because it's not my norm usually to do that. I thought it was 8:30. If we're going to do business in the House, let's do it the proper way. But since it was close to adjournment time, just a couple of minutes, I shouldn't have. I recognize that and I want to apologize to the member for Scarborough Centre.

Going back to Bill 148, since my time from yesterday to today has been cut by 10 minutes, I'll try to squash in as much as I can for the benefit of the House and the audience who normally watches the workings of the House.

We are dealing with another part of Bill 103. Bill 103 does exactly what the people didn't want and still don't want, and Bill 148 tries to apply the contents of Bill 103 in a way that the people still don't want. If we have heard one united chorus throughout the province as well — it's not only Metropolitan Toronto, I think it's throughout the province — they have said, "What you are doing and how you are doing it is not what we want and you should not proceed in this particular way."

But being what it is, the government did bring in Bill 103, and now we are dealing with the imposition of its contents and its imposition on the people of Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto. So we are dealing now with the administrative aspects of that particular bill. We are dealing with the administrative aspects with respect to social services, the delivery of all kinds of services. We will have to absorb the total housing component, some 80,000 to 84,000 units — we have to deal with that as local municipalities — and highways, byways and a number of other issues. What it says is that all of this is not the view of the people of Ontario, of Metropolitan Toronto, it is not the view of the opposition; it is the view of the government, and their view is being imposed against our will, unfortunately.

We all recall too well when the debate was raging on and we said, "You've got to make some changes because this is not going to work." We heard from over 1,000 deputants over the course of the hearings and all of them said that the way you are proposing it, the way you are going about it, we are going to see an increase in taxes. We have heard the same views from the AMO conference that was in Toronto these past few days. They said that the level of services as we know now it is going to disappear. Of course, I heard the member for Scarborough Centre, I believe, last night when he said that people are entitled to continue to receive the services they are getting are now, that they are accustomed to receiving now, and I agree. I think they should. The problem is that the way we are going about it, they will not be receiving the same services.

Why were they so concerned? Create one big local level of government, if you call it a city or megacity or whatever, and this will be true: The local politicians will be far more remote from the local people, the local communities.

I don't have to tell you. It doesn't take a big brain to say that the people from the northwest corner of the city of North York, which is Steeles and Islginton Avenue, just a stone's throw from the Humber River, they only have to drive 10 minutes to be in the city of North York, where they would receive all the services they are accustomed to and they are paying taxes for. Can you expect the same people to drive downtown to city hall? I don't think so. That is just one small aspect.

When we are dealing with the views and the implementation of those bills, the content is something else. This is part of the problem with the way we run people's business, our citizens' business here. When Bill 103 was introduced, we had public hearings on that particular bill, on that particular content. In Bill 148 there are a lot of changes. Once we approved, once the public hearings were over and the people made submissions on the contents of Bill 103, they did not have a chance to comment on the amendments brought by the government itself. They didn't have a chance. Why? Because they didn't want to. Why? Because they had their own agenda. Why? Because they didn't listen to the people.

If they would have listened to the people — as the member for Scarborough East said, "We gave you 723 hours of hearings." Wonderful. If the government has given the people of Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto 723 hours of hearings, then what did they learn? What did they hear? What are they giving to the people of Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto? Nothing of what the people of Metropolitan Toronto said. This is unfortunate. It is seriously unfortunate, because it shows the arrogance of a government saying to the people of Ontario: "It doesn't matter if you are going to march downtown, down Yonge Street, down to Queen's Park, if you have a meeting of 15,000 people. We're not going to listen to you."

We had a referendum and the Premier says, "We aren't going to listen to it." But, darn it, they spent over $1 million of taxpayers' money to try and derail that particular referendum. What did they say? Some 78% said, "No, we don't want it." But they also recognized that we need some changes and they only wanted an opportunity to participate in the process, to have input. They said: "This is our life, these are our communities. That's where we live. That's where we raise our kids, so we want to have a say." Now that's gone and we are dealing with the aftermath of Bill 103 and the implementations of the downloading.

We have heard, for example, in the last two or three days, even AMO throughout Ontario, the local politicians. I appreciate the member for Northumberland when he says, "If taxes will go up, it depends what kind of people you are going to elect at the municipal level." I'll tell you,

if I were a municipal politician presently or someone who is thinking of running in November, I would take some exception to that. Are you saying to me, local politician, that if we don't do our job in any particular way it's our problem if we have to raise taxes, or if now instead of garbage pickup twice a week, we have to go to once a week? Like Mr Leach said yesterday: "Don't blame us, municipal politicians. You're going to have an opportunity to go at us now and you're doing a good job criticizing what we are doing." My goodness, isn't that nice, that we are passing the buck. Not only the buck, but also we want to impose our views on the local politicians throughout Ontario. God forbid now.

**1730**

The minister is taking this "holier than thou" attitude, that they don't want to hear the people of Ontario, that they don't want to change an iota to accommodate the people of Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto. Now they are saying: "If you're going to cut services, it's your fault. If you're going to raise taxes, it's your fault." But look at what we have given them. We have given them no tools to operate with. The only thing they know is they cut about $1 billion.

The Premier said yesterday: "Do you know what? We are very slow coming up with figures ourselves." Well, my God, Mr Premier, if you're so slow coming up with the figures, it means you don't have the right figures and you don't want to provide the people of Ontario with the right figures. If that's so, then I think you should take a second look at this legislation. Take your time and do it right.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Len Wood:** I want to comment briefly on the position the member for Yorkview is taking that services are going to be cut or taxes are going to go up. You can't have both. We know that the hand-picked transition team that is going around Toronto is trying to force $450 million in cuts, layoffs and retirements out of the employees who work for the new megacity. There is also a concern that the megacity — and this Bill 148 is an addition to the megacity bill — is going to cost an additional $200 million.

What the people are concerned with is it looks like they're not going to have any public hearings on this. I know there are a lot of people out there in the new megacity of Toronto who would like to have public hearings so they could have a say on what they see happening. This is an example of how you have the bully tactics of the Conservative government. They ram things through even though 76.3% of the population voted against the megacity. We have Bill 148. They call it technical amendments that have to be brought in before they can go ahead with the elections that are going to be held this fall. All it is is a matter of reducing the services people have right now and at the same time raising taxes.

If this is an example of what they're doing to the city of Toronto, and that's going to happen throughout all of Ontario and throughout northern Ontario, we're going to have communities that are going to be bankrupt as a result of the property tax increases that are going to be forced on to the people in this province from Mike Harris and his Conservative government.

I had a letter from a person in Hamilton saying the whole Tory cabinet should resign and they should be prosecuted in court for what they're doing to this province. I don't know if I'd go that far, but it's in a letter here that this is a feeling people are having throughout all of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your time has expired.

**Mr Newman:** I'm pleased to rise and respond to the member for Yorkview's presentation today. I accept his apology for last night and I know he of course meant no harm by that, and I just want to say to him, thank you for being honourable and making that comment today.

In his presentation today, the member for Yorkview spoke about the bill and I say, if you agree with the bill, then let's pass it. Let's get on. Let's get through this bill.

He also made reference to the fact of having to drive to downtown Toronto for the people of North York, or in my case the people of Scarborough. But I've suggested, and perhaps he hasn't heard my suggestion, that the former city halls be used as a one-stop shopping centre, in other words, for municipal services, so that the people of Scarborough or the people, in his case, of North York could go to their former municipal buildings and have one level of municipal government services provided in those spots.

Currently, the people in his area who want to see their Metro councillor have to go downtown to John Street in Toronto to meet their Metro councillor, as do the people in Scarborough.

To see their own city councillor, whether it be in North York or Scarborough, they would go to their existing city hall. What I'm saying is that, yes, the councillors should have a spot downtown, but they really ought to have office space provided for them in their existing city halls as we have constituency offices in our own constituencies so that the people from the existing areas can go to that one-stop shopping centre for municipal services.

The member for Cochrane North spoke about people being prosecuted. If anyone should be prosecuted, it's the former NDP government for increasing the debt of this province by $50 billion to over $100 billion.

**Mr Miclash:** It gives me great pleasure to rise and comment on the comments made by the member for Yorkview, who has been in this area for some 39 years. I'm sure we can all agree he knows of what he speaks when he gets up and talks about what this government is doing in terms of his city, in terms of his portion of the city which he represents. I think he put his argument quite well.

He mentioned AMO being in the city of Toronto this week and the Minister of Municipal Affairs going to listen to representatives from the other parts of the province, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Premier himself going to find out that the municipal leaders up there are quite worried. They don't see what we talked about here in the House today as happening only as a Toronto thing. They're concerned about how this is

going to affect their communities, their municipalities, as well.

The member for Yorkview talked about dumping and the downloading of services. Every municipal leader, every person who is even thinking about running for municipal office, as the member has indicated, is concerned about what this is going to translate to in terms of the cost to their local taxpayer. It's not going to be Mike Harris or Chris Hodgson or Al Leach who are going to be responsible at that time. It's going to be the local politician representing the municipality who is going to have to face the electorate when they give out that next tax bill. They have expressed this concern in a good number of ways. It's not just the Toronto area that concerns the people of the province; it's a concern to all our citizens, whether it be Toronto or small-town northwestern Ontario.

**Mrs Boyd:** I'd like to congratulate the member for Yorkview on his discussion of the way in which people perceive what is happening in terms of Bill 148. It is important for us to recognize that when members like the member for Yorkview talk about their constituents, they're talking about constituents who do not see themselves as Torontonians; they see themselves very much as citizens of a municipality that is quite different in nature, that has made different choices, made different decisions about how services are going to be offered.

When the member for Scarborough East talks about services being offered uniformally across the board and that necessarily being a good thing, the citizens who have voted for governments in the constituent municipalities that have made different decisions have to scratch their heads, because they know those local politicians, those people who live in their area and represent them on a very local basis, have made those decisions because of what is best for them as citizens of areas like Yorkview.

It is always puzzling for those who live in the six constituent municipalities that the assumption of sameness, particularly when that sameness may be at a lower level of service than they have enjoyed in the decisions made by their elected officials over many years — it's not necessarily a positive thing. It is an effort of this government to try and sell this bill that encourages them to use trigger words like equity of services. Equity doesn't wash when it is a lower level of service.

**1740**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Yorkview, you have two minutes.

**Mr Sergio:** I wish to thank the members who have responded to my presentation: the members for Scarborough Centre, Kenora, I believe, Cochrane North and London Centre as well.

If I may add one particular thing, it is that especially in government actions, every time there is a change, people tend to respond, either positively or negatively. I guess the government proceeds according to the way they see it or according to whatever their agenda is. The opposition responds according to the way they see it on behalf of the people they represent.

Let me say this: This has been one of those issues where the opposition have been sharing the same views with taxpayers throughout Ontario, throughout Metro here, without any difference exchange whatsoever.

Indeed, yes, when there is a change, there is a certain amount of apprehension, but when you have a government that on a continuous basis since they won, since they have taken power, has started to pound on the people who elected them, then they have reason to worry; then they have reason to be apprehensive about it. When you have a government that does not listen to the people, when you have a government that day in and day out keeps on making cuts affecting the general welfare of the residents of Ontario, when you have a government that on a continuous basis says, "We are doing what we have been told," we can't just sit idle and let the government run away. Cuts to health care, education, imposing user fees on seniors, those are the concerns that the government should be taking care —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Laughren:** I am pleased to rise in my place and take part in this debate, which basically deals with the new megacity and is an offspring of the previous megacity bill. It takes something —

**Mr Gilchrist:** Time on the clock.

**Mr Laughren:** Don't worry about the clock. You're such clock-watchers over there. Don't you believe in the work ethic? What's the matter with you?

I never thought I'd see the day when any government could bring me to a position of feeling sorry for Toronto. Very often I've felt resentment, regardless of which government was in office, about the imposition of what I would call Toronto values on the rest of the province. I've felt that and my constituents have felt that. Many people —

**Mr Gilchrist:** I notice all your Toronto members left.

**Mr Laughren:** They know my views on this. But in that regard, today I come here to praise Toronto, not to bury her. I want to speak in support of those people who feel that what's being done to the city of Toronto is most inappropriate.

I'd like to go back to first principles as to why we are faced with this. Megacity was not in the Common Sense Revolution. There was nothing prior to the last election that I know of that said there was going to be one Toronto and all of the six municipalities would become one. I don't remember that in the Common Sense Revolution, which the Tories like to refer to ad nauseam. But it wasn't there.

What is driving this need to amalgamate in the Metropolitan Toronto area? You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that the pointy heads in the Ministry of Finance, and I know some of them, sat down and they said, "Look, folks, if you intend to deliver the 30% tax cut and you want to get the deficit down and you don't want to raise taxes, then something's got to give." Guess what's going to give? The municipal taxpayers are going to give and give and give. That's what it's come to. That's what's behind it. Let's not pretend that anything else is driving this agenda.

In that regard, I'm indebted to my colleague from Sault Ste Marie for giving me an article that I think I'd like to share with the members opposite. Those of you who are considered neo-cons, the new Conservatives who are basically closet Reformers, would know New Jersey governor, Christine Todd Whitman, who is of course the governor of New Jersey and the source of all the intellectual fodder that sustains the Tory party in this province. This is what the headline says: "Whitman Makes Election Year Promise to Curb Rise in Property Taxes Caused by Her Own Fiscal Irresponsibility." The article goes on as follows:

"New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman has made another election year promise to reduce property taxes in New Jersey, which have soared over the past three years due to Whitman's own irresponsible fiscal policies. Whitman said yesterday that she wants to create a program to ease the property tax burden, but failed to offer specific details of her proposal. Whitman has been widely criticized for the rise in the state's property taxes, caused by her 30% income tax cut" — sound familiar, folks? — "which cost the state $4 billion in revenue" — in Ontario it will be around $5 billion a year — " and forced Whitman to cut state aid to municipalities and school districts to cover the loss. During Whitman's time as governor, the typical residential property tax bill in New Jersey increased about 12%, outpacing the 9% national rate of growth. The state's per capita property tax burden was $3,562 in 1995, the highest in the nation." That's from Associated Press.

It's pretty obvious what is happening here. They're not creating big government in Toronto because Tories instinctively like big government. Tories instinctively like small government, at least that's what they tell us, that they believe in small government. So here they go: They create a mega-government in Metropolitan Toronto. Is that the traditional Tory approach, to create big governments? There were warning signs on the horizon years ago when regional governments were created, very often over the express wishes of the local municipalities.

The Tories really are caught in a bind here. They have to do something to download on to the next level of government, and I found it passing strange, I think it was the member for Scarborough East standing up and whining — to use the Premier's word — about downloading from Ottawa. When we were in government and we were trying to straighten out the feds and give them a message that what they were doing was unfair to Ontario, Premier Harris stood in his place and said: "Stop your whining. You don't have a revenue problem; you have an expenditure problem." That's what he told us over and over again. So why is the neo-con Mr Gilchrist whining about cuts from Ottawa transfers to Ontario? That's what he was doing earlier this afternoon.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Laughren:** Maybe it was the member for Scarborough Centre, but neo-cons all look alike. Certainly one of you was whining this afternoon about the cuts in transfer payments from Ottawa, and all I'm doing is reminding you that your own Premier said you shouldn't do that, that we in Ontario shouldn't do that. "Deal with your own problem," he kept saying.

I would say to members opposite that they're going to have an interesting couple of years left in this term, and it's going to be truly fascinating to see how they rationalize everything that is being done, because very often what sounds good in theory is much different when it comes to the implementation stage, and the next two years is when all of the rubber hits the ground. It's the next two years.

The first two years have been easy for you, very easy. All you did was announce programs, announce cuts in welfare, announce downloading — all announcements. Now it starts to happen. Now people start to feel the impact of what you are doing, and we are going to see how resolved the backbenchers are. The cabinet will hang tough, solidarity forever in the cabinet, but I can hardly wait for the backbenchers to start to really feel the heat back home. It's already starting. We've already seen a couple.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** We don't go home. We stay here in Toronto.

**1750**

**Mr Laughren:** You don't go home. I see. Maybe the member for Wellington has got the right idea here. Don't go home. Stay down here in Toronto. You're so popular in Toronto now, you should all want to stay here for the weekends.

I must say I travel the province a little bit, not as much as I used to, and when I drop into places like Chatham-Kent and talk to the local folks in the local convenience store who are standing there playing the VLTs, they express great dismay at the policy of this government.

I think the government surprised a lot of people with their megacity bill, because it seemed to come from nowhere. In fact, we know where it came from: It came directly as a result of your 30% tax cut which is going to cost the treasury in the neighbourhood of $5 billion a year. That's got to come from somewhere. Sure, the economy is improving and that means more revenues, of course it does, but if you think you're getting that much extra to pay for this, then you've got another thought coming.

We did some arithmetic up north — I shouldn't say "we" — the municipalities did some arithmetic up north and it shows that if things stay the way they most recently have been announced, property taxpayers in my area will pay in the neighbourhood of $1,000 more per property. They will not take kindly to that, folks. If you think that's not raising taxes despite your promise, try and tell that to the people who are paying the taxes.

I would simply say that we in this caucus are opposed to this bill because it's basically attached to Bill 103, the megacity bill. We were opposed to that, so naturally we would be opposed to this bill as well. Some members opposite were implying there was something illogical about opposing this bill. Well, I don't think there is.

For those reasons we will be voting against this bill, just as I think there will be a few voters in the megacity of

Toronto who will be voting against the Tory party come the next election. I can hardly wait for that event.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm pleased to respond to our colleague's comments. It's incredibly intriguing that in the one breath he can say that we're somehow to be derided for a solidarity of purpose and then conclude his own comments by saying, "We will all be voting against it." The herd mentality is heard from again in this House. Travelling like a pack, the NDP have decided they will all be voting against it; not individual thought being given to this, not the Toronto members maybe having a different view from others. It's just incredible.

To suggest that somehow we should take some kind of direction from the governor of New Jersey, and on the flip side, not to take any time to deal with the content of this bill itself — I did not hear from the member one suggestion that a single clause needs to be changed and that his concern is with the pension transfer, or that any of the wording about what happens to the TTC is somehow suspect or needs to be improved upon. I won't suggest he hasn't read the bill but others may draw that conclusion. Not one opposition member yet, not one, has mentioned a single deficiency or defect in this bill.

The bottom line is, here we are after seven hours of debate, seven hours they have spent, and they've talked about other bills that are long past and long behind us. They've talked about the fact that they have a crystal ball and their vision is more doom and gloom for the province. They fly in the face of the job creation, they fly in the face of the people who have been relieved of their dependency on welfare, they fly in the face of new housing starts, increased car sales, and an increase in consumer confidence.

You know what? The people of the province aren't buying it: 57%. of the people in those same polls you referred to agree with the direction we're taking. Bill 148 is an important but very technical part of that.

**Mr Sergio:** I'm pleased to respond as well to the member for Nickel Belt. If there is one thing I have admired while in the House, it is that when the member speaks, he speaks with authority and speaks with true experience and is really appreciated by all the members.

I have to say that he has exposed to the House not the benefits of the bill, but the problems associated with it. If we cannot support it, it is because of the particular contents of the bill.

Just let me add to the comments of the member for Scarborough East when he says no one in the opposition —

**Mr Gilchrist:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just this very afternoon, your colleague the Acting Speaker ruled that it is totally inappropriate for a member to take any time in his comments to deal with the responses from other members and he must restrict his comments solely to the two minutes.

**The Speaker:** Point taken, thank you. Member for Yorkview, maintain your comments.

**Mr Laughren:** He didn't say "any time." That's a distortion.

**Mr Gilchrist:** No, it isn't.

**The Speaker:** I don't think the Speaker, from what I can ascertain, ruled exactly how you have interpreted the ruling.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Well, I'll help you. I think what the Speaker did was rule much like I ruled with the member for Mississauga South. You are supposed to maintain comments to those directed about what was said. There has been a lot of latitude with respect to that, questions and comments, in the past. As I have said in the past, including yesterday and the day before, and as I think the Speaker said today, we do our best to maintain control, but let's be clear: Everybody, on every side of the House, skirts that rule occasionally.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** To the member for Scarborough East, I think that's what Mr Leadston ruled. I don't want to have a debate with you any more. Thank you very much. Member for Yorkview.

**Mr Sergio:** As I was saying, Mr Speaker, complimenting the member for Nickel Belt before I was interrupted very politely by the member for Scarborough East, in response to what has been said in the House, the opposition indeed had a number of amendments to Bill 103, and every member of the House knows what happened to those amendments. Nobody can deny that. If none of those were present or attached to the bill as we are now debating it, only blame it on the government side.

I think the member for Nickel Belt has expressed the views of most of the opposition, and that is why we cannot support this bill.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Just in case anybody across the way or anybody out there has any question as to who set the pattern for this government or who Mike Harris went to for advice in putting together the Common Sense Revolution and pouring it on the people, I'll read a piece out of the Sault Star:

"It is interesting and revealing to learn that the Mike Harris government's 'Common Sense Revolution,' complete with its 30% cut in provincial personal income tax phased in over three years, was actually patterned on the successful 1993 election campaign of Christine Whitman, the present Republican Governor of New Jersey.

"An analysis of the New Jersey experience written by William Walker appeared as a three-part series in the Toronto Star.

"The author points out that in March 1994 Harris went to New Jersey to meet Governor Whitman" —

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** To play golf.

**Mr Martin:** Yes, to play golf — "and to seek additional advice. Two months later the Conservative program was presented to Ontarians at a news conference.

"The appeal to 'common sense' which had figured so prominently in the Whitman election campaign became the 'Common Sense Revolution' of Mike Harris.

"Now that Governor Whitman is three years into her mandate, would it not be instructive to see how they are faring in New Jersey?"

That is exactly what the member for Nickel Belt tried to do here in this House this afternoon: share and shed some light on what's happening because of the Common Sense Revolution in Ontario.

"According to Walker, in order to pay for the tax cut Whitman has had to lay off thousands of civil servants, cut many health and social service programs, slash funding to municipalities and school boards, privatize many government services, and siphon more than $1 billion from the state pension fund."

I don't need to go any further, do I, Speaker?

**The Speaker:** Well timed. Further questions and comments?

**Mr Newman:** I'm pleased to rise and respond to the member for Nickel Belt. I guess I'm surprised he's sorry for Toronto. I was quite surprised to hear that. I don't know if I'm out of order in speaking about the bill when the member opposite didn't speak about the bill and I'm supposed to respond to him, but I'm going to speak about what I thought he might have wanted to say in his comments.

**The Speaker:** That's completely out of order. You have to talk about what he commented on.

**Mr Gilchrist:** He made a reference to the bill.

**Mr Newman:** Yes, he made a reference to Bill 148. What I'm about to say is in Bill 148, and I know he wanted to say it, but I guess he didn't have enough time to talk about the fact that this bill allows the Toronto Transit Commission and Exhibition Place to continue operating, and the Metro zoo and the Hummingbird Centre. I see the member for Algoma is —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Newman:** No one disagrees with it, the member for London Centre says, so why don't you let the bill pass?

It allows the Guild Inn to keep going, the ambulance services, homes for the aged, street vending, operating a licensing commission, to plan and act in the case of an emergency, to receive and dispose of liquid and solid waste which we're hearing a lot about today, to establish and operate controlled-access roads — very important things to the people of Metropolitan Toronto — to ensure that official plans are in place to guide land use, to provide, importantly, for pensions and benefits of municipal board employees and retirees.

I thought the member for Nickel Belt would have wanted to talk about that, because this bill ensures that those pension benefits are paid. I know he would not want to keep the people who have earned those pension benefits away from their money.

**The Speaker:** Response, the member for Nickel Belt?

**Mr Laughren:** I wish to thank those who responded to my remarks, even though they were off topic somewhat because they insisted on talking about the bill.

I must say I was a little taken aback by the comments of the member for Scarborough East talking about a herd mentality. Was he talking about the Tory back bench? No? I assume that means the Tory back bench won't all be supporting this bill then when it comes to a vote, that there will be some Tories who will vote against it. I can only assume that. You don't have a herd mentality, so some of your members will vote against this bill. That's what I heard the member for Scarborough East saying. Who would blame them?

You were very defensive about having the Common Sense Revolution imported from the United States. It's very clear that's where it came from. You shouldn't even try denying it, because the model is clear. It's as though you lifted it holus-bolus from New Jersey and brought it into Ontario. The language is the same, the motivation is the same, the ideology is the same, and guess what? The results are going to be the same as well. It's already starting to happen. We can see that.

For those members over there who said I didn't comment on the bill, I thought I made it very clear. Just as you should have withdrawn Bill 103, you should now attach this bill to 103 and withdraw both of them, cancel them both.

**The Speaker:** It now being marginally past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:30 of the clock later on today.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*

*Evening sitting reported in volume B.*

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

## Wednesday 27 August 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Ontario student assistance program**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11547
**Casinos**
Ms Lankin ..... 11547
**Project Turnaround**
Mr McLean ..... 11547
**Ferry service**
Mr Michael Brown ..... 11548
**Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library**
Mr Silipo ..... 11548
**Frank McKechnie**
Mrs Marland ..... 11548
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11549
**Northern health services**
Ms Martel ..... 11549
**School curriculum**
Mr Jim Brown ..... 11549

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Cordiano ..... 11549
Mr Harris ..... 11550, 11551
Mr Hampton ..... 11550
**Occupational health and safety**
Mr Hampton ..... 11551
Mrs Witmer ..... 11551
**Education financing**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11552
Mr Snobelen ..... 11552
**Hospital restructuring**
Mr Kennedy ..... 11553
Mr Wilson ..... 11553
**Child care**
Ms Lankin ..... 11553
Mrs Ecker ..... 11553
**Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library**
Mr Galt ..... 11555
Ms Mushinski ..... 11555
**Public safety**
Mr Duncan ..... 11555
Mr Palladini ..... 11556
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Martin ..... 11556
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11556
Mr Wildman ..... 11556
**Interprovincial trade**
Mr Newman ..... 11557
Mr Saunderson ..... 11557
**Casinos**
Mr Bradley ..... 11557
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11558
**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Wildman ..... 11558
Mr Harris ..... 11558

### PETITIONS

**Court decision**
Mr Cleary ..... 11558
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11559
Mrs Munro ..... 11560
**Rent regulation**
Ms Churley ..... 11559
**Vehicle registration fees**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11559
Mr Ramsay ..... 11560
Mr Michael Brown ..... 11560
Mr Miclash ..... 11561, 11562
**Pay equity**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11559
**School councils**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11559
**Hospital restructuring**
Mr Silipo ..... 11559
Ms Churley ..... 11560
Mrs Boyd ..... 11561, 11562
**Protection of privacy**
Mr Miclash ..... 11560
**Cancer prevention**
Ms Churley ..... 11560
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Ramsay ..... 11561
**Ambulance service**
Mr Hampton ..... 11561
**Prescription drugs**
Mr Miclash ..... 11561

### SECOND READINGS

**City of Toronto Act, 1997 (No. 2)**
Bill 148, *Mr Leach*
Mr Newman ..... 11562, 11565, 11569 11573, 11578, 11582
Mr Cordiano ..... 11564, 11566, 11570
Ms Lankin ..... 11564, 11569, 11575
Mr Gilchrist ..... 11564, 11565, 11569 11572, 11576, 11580
Mr Bisson ..... 11565
Mr Miclash ..... 11565, 11578
Mr Len Wood ..... 11568, 11578
Mrs Boyd ..... 11570, 11573, 11576 11579
Mr Sergio ..... 11572, 11575, 11576 11579, 11581
Mr Laughren ..... 11573, 11579, 11582
Mr Galt ..... 11574, 11576
Mr Martin ..... 11581
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11582

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Visitors**
The Speaker ..... 11549
**Standing orders reform**
Mr Wildman ..... 11554
Mr David Johnson ..... 11554
The Speaker ..... 11555


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mercredi 27 août 1997


### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto (N° 2),** projet de loi 148, *M. Leach*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11582

### AUTRES TRAVAUX

**Réforme du Règlement**
M. Pouliot ..... 11554
M. Bisson ..... 11554, 11555


*Evening sitting reported in volume B.*

A 2 ON
X1
-D23

Government Publications

No. 220B

Nº 220B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Wednesday 27 August 1997**

**Mercredi 27 août 1997**

SEP 5 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 août 1997

*The House met at 1830.*

## PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSITION STABILITY ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 VISANT À ASSURER LA STABILITÉ AU COURS DE LA TRANSITION DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 136, An Act to provide for the expeditious resolution of disputes during collective bargaining in certain sectors and to facilitate collective bargaining following restructuring in the public sector and to make certain amendments to the Employment Standards Act and the Pay Equity Act / Projet de loi 136, Loi prévoyant le règlement rapide des différends lors des négociations collectives dans certains secteurs, facilitant les négociations collectives à la suite de la restructuration dans le secteur public et apportant certaines modifications à la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et à la Loi sur l'équité salariale.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill 136 and to express very clearly the strong opposition that I personally have to this bill but that I am proud to represent my constituents as having.

It's indeed a very serious issue when a government is making massive change and then decides it is going so fast it cannot allow the normal process of labour relations to proceed. We have had a situation in this province over many years where due process in labour relations has been extremely important not only to employees, not only to union members, but also to the employers.

We all know that when those who are in a relationship of employment need to work together to find mutually satisfactory solutions, the possibility of those solutions holding, the possibility of those solutions being the groundwork for productive and very contributing work when it is in the public service is the best way to achieve these circumstances.

In this province, when the decision was made that there were some workers whose work was essential, who would not be able to strike, to withdraw their services, a process was put into place to make sure they did not lose all their rights in giving up the right of strike, that there was a fair process that would ensure they could come to a just conclusion when they have issues in the employment area.

Members of this House will remember how insulted, how incredibly insulted, firefighters were in this province when this government decided to put a no-strike clause in the new Fire Protection Act. They were insulted because it never occurred to them to withdraw their services. They are public servants and they are proud of it, and they are always prepared to go into a dispute resolution process that is balanced and has fairness on both sides. That is true of the other essential workers who, along with firefighters, are affected by this bill.

The underlying assumption in this bill is a disregard of the commitment, a disregard of the good faith of those who adopt public service in these essential service fields. That is what makes it so sad, because what this government is saying is: "We are making such massive changes, we are so hell-bent on ensuring that there are cuts and reductions in every area of public service, we know it's going to create chaos and we have come down very clearly on the side of employers."

Nowhere is that more evident than in the health care field. At least the Ontario Hospital Association and the chief executive officers of major hospitals, the big winners in the huge restructuring process, are not trying to fool their employees. They're very blunt and clear in public. But if they're going to accomplish it in the time frame this government has insisted upon, they need a process whereby they can get a resolution immediately, not a resolution that is mutually negotiated, but immediately.

They have again and again publicly stated that the only way they can meet the deadlines in the restructuring commission's orders is if they can override the collective bargaining rights of the employees they employ. At least they're not as duplicitous as municipal authorities, who we know have asked the government for the same kind of hammer for their employees but who, when they see the rage out there and understand the difficulty they're going to have in terms of retaining any kind of decency in their subsequent relations with their employees, at least are urging this government not to go forward with this bill at this point but to enter into meaningful dialogue with unions and with employers to see if some other method of resolving potential disputes is met.

My colleague the member for Hamilton Centre read from an article written by the head of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in which it was pointed out that all this paranoia being expressed by the government in this bill arises out of their view of the rights of workers. It is extremely important that we understand that Bill 136 is a very clear statement of the regard – I should say, of course, the lack of regard – this government is showing for the collective bargaining process, for the good faith and the commitment of public servants in this province, for the willingness of essential workers to continue to keep their promises around providing essential

services even when labour disputes are there, and finally for the workers themselves.

Bill 136 is a very clear demarcation for this province in the whole field of labour relations. It's very sad, because once you make it very clear that there is no trust on the part of the government that those who are in essential services will continue to provide those essential services, ongoing problems in the labour relations field follow as the night does the day.

Why do I say there's a basic lack of trust and an imbalance in this act? Clearly, the way it is set up, both parties have to agree to go to an arbitration by a fair and impartial, mutually agreed-to arbitrator. We've heard from the OHA that there's no way they're going to agree to that. I was talking to employee representatives on the committee that has been set up in London to accomplish hospital restructuring, a human resource planning committee set up by order of the hospital restructuring commission to include all the representatives of all the bargaining units and the employers. Given the very urgent timetable of hospital restructuring, particularly the very imminent transfer of two psychiatric hospitals to the responsibility of the St Joseph's Health Centre, one would think this committee would be meeting weekly for hours to try to resolve the many issues there in terms of a human resource planning function.

**1840**

Is that what's happening? No, it is not. It's not happening because the employer representatives on that committee have made it very clear that they're not proceeding with the human resources planning function until Bill 136 is in place, until they have sword of Damocles in their hands, over the necks of all those union representatives, those employee representatives, until they have all the power in their hands. Why do they have all the power? Because if either party says an agreement isn't possible, it goes to this Dispute Resolution Commission, and we all know what that means.

We all know that the fair and impartial members of this commission are going to mirror the kinds of choices the Minister of Natural Resources has insisted upon for the Niagara Escarpment Commission. "Fair and impartial" means someone who has already declared his, usually, or her allegiance to a particular point of view. That certainly is clear with the new chair of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, who has opposed the ability of the Niagara Escarpment Commission to protect the environment along a very sensitive piece of the environment, has very clearly been part of the move away from the environmental and natural resource protection that has been very important.

Who can we expect to be appointed to this commission? Why on earth would employees believe that a government that has consistently and consistently attacked their ability to bargain collectively with their employers would appoint people in whom they could have any faith and trust? Why would they? These are not foolish people. They know that the arbitration process that was set up for essential employees was a tradeoff, and the tradeoff was, "If we can't strike, we have to have recourse to an arbitrator who is not necessarily going to represent only one side of the equation."

Arbitrators are chosen and have to be acceptable to both sides. There is a list of them, and they go along. They of course become unacceptable to either side if they show themselves unable to demonstrate the kind of impartiality necessary to the arbitration process when you have taken away the only tool people have to represent the interests of their employees.

For those employees who are not classified as essential employees who are also going to be affected by this act, they are going to come under this hammer as well. Of course, we all are waiting for the school board hammer; we're all waiting for Mr Snobelen to drop that crisis on the whole system of education.

What becomes very clear in all the actions going on is that the government is not prepared to patiently negotiate and to allow fairness to apply. They are so determined to get their own way that they cannot allow that process to unwind. They are in such a hurry to try to accomplish, according to their timetable, the transformation of Ontario from a well-serviced, well-respected, safe community to their vision of the neo-con heaven that they cannot have the patience to allow the kind of negotiation that could resolve these problems.

It is very sad to me, because I've seen the fact that this can be resolved between employers and employees during substantial change. The member for Windsor-Sandwich talked about how that had been accomplished with hospital restructuring in Windsor.

In London, University Hospital and Victoria Hospital joined to form the London Health Sciences Centre. University Hospital was not unionized in its nursing staff. There were substantial differences in representation and the groups representing the various non-nursing staff groups between those two facilities. Yet, with time, with patience, with a lot of discussion, they were able to accomplish what they needed to do to bring those two entities together without a labour dispute. It wasn't easy. There were many differences between the groups, but they managed to do that, and they managed to leave those employees who were unionized to maintain their status and those who were unionized to maintain theirs.

This government comes along and says: "When the next step of restructuring comes along, we know better than those employers and employees. We're going to set up a process whereby someone chosen by cabinet is going to decide who will be the representative of those groups and is going to decide what the outcome of any disputes will be" — very, very contrary to what has gone on in Ontario over many years.

It doesn't have to be this way. Change can be accomplished without the confrontation, without the clear disregard for the rights of those who are employees in this province. It is completely unnecessary for this government to make any assumption about the inability of employees and employers to negotiate. It is not right that they would preclude a process that might indeed, as it did, I believe, at the London Health Sciences Centre, enable groups of employees to work together who had not been able to do that in the past.

I have another very deep concern, and that's around the police of this province. I have a very deep concern around the fine women and men who make up the Ontario Provincial Police, the fact that they are in a situation where they have slipped from being a force that had a very adequate level of salary compared to other police forces in this province to 27th place now, at the very same time they are having to take on more and more responsibility for complex investigations as part of the change in policing we're seeing, at the very time we are trying to find ways to police effectively in areas that may make determinations around the change of their policing structure.

They have not had a contract for a good length of time. They've been working for a year without a contract, and they applied on May 1 for arbitration. They didn't ask for the right to strike; they applied for arbitration. This bill comes along and says that if your proceedings were commenced after June 3, there is absolutely no way you can get to arbitration. Since they applied for arbitration on May 1, they have a little hope, because this bill says the prohibition doesn't apply if the proceedings were commenced before June 3 and a final decision is issued before the DRA comes into force.

**1850**

We know this government is trying to rush this legislation through so fast, and we know the minister didn't agree until recently. The last I heard, and certainly in the paper this morning, there was a suggestion that no arbitrator is yet acting with the parties. The minister said this morning in the paper that he has every confidence that he can resolve this dispute before this bill comes into place. Yet we have, I would say, in the London Free Press on August 19, the Management Board Chair saying very clearly: "'The provincial government is trying to hold the line.... This government holds the police in high esteem, but at the same time we have a budget to balance and that is a concern.'...Johnson said the government has to be careful it doesn't set a precedent with the OPP that would lead to costly new agreements right across the province."

We know who gets his way most often in the cabinet. We know who's more powerful in the cabinet. The police officers of this province, the Ontario Provincial Police, deserve better. We will be watching to see if the Solicitor General indeed is acting in good faith and if indeed there will be a resolution to this problem, because I have an apprehension and the police officers who talk to me have an apprehension. They believe very strongly that they may be left out in the cold even though they have been loyal supporters of their inability to strike and loyal supporters of the notion that you have an alternative dispute resolution when this sort of situation occurs that is binding on all parties.

Already we hear the police saying they will be supporting the other civil servants who oppose this bill. I would say to this government that one of the ways in which you need to understand the effect of this bill is to listen to those police officers and how it's likely to affect them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I want to thank the member for London Centre for her comments and her contribution to the debate. I just want to touch on a few things that she touched on, one being that either party can refer a dispute to the Dispute Resolution Commission. This is true, but she did neglect to mention that that's the case only after each side bargains in good faith and has exhausted all existing labour relations possibilities which currently exist. So it's not something where they can just turn around tomorrow and say: "Well, we're not going to talk to you. Off to the DRC it goes." This is something where the commissioner at the DRC will say, "No, you have to bargain in good faith under the Labour Relations Act," and if he sees another side, he can send them back.

The other contention I think that's really unrealistic is who will be appointed to the Labour Relations Transition Commission and Dispute Resolution Commission. I think it would be naïve to say that the person who ran my barbecue last summer could be someone who the Tories would promote to one of these commissions. Realistically, the issues that are going to have to be handled by both commissions are very complex and you can be assured that the government will only appoint people who have a history, have experience and have a good knowledge of the issues that are going to come before them. That's only common sense.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I'm pleased to respond to the comments made by the member for London Centre. They were thoughtful and very rational and well reasoned. I think she's absolutely correct when she points out the negative assumptions behind this bill. There's no doubt about it: There was no consultation, as everyone has said — as AMO has said, as the police have said, as the firefighters have said. It assumes that people will attempt to take advantage of a situation and it definitely distorts the arrangement.

As a matter of fact, the Police Association of Ontario views the legislation as the government's way of fixing the game in favour of the municipalities' administrations. If that were not true, why is it that several municipalities have said they will not enter into negotiations until such time as 136 is in effect because they know it will favour their position?

When the member for Niagara Falls, the PA to the minister, says they have to pursue all possible avenues, we know that is not going to be the case when the employer has what the member for London Centre calls a hammer to use, and they will use it. Why will they use it? Because they're strapped for resources. Many resources have been taken away by this provincial government, resources that were needed to continue services, and now they have to scramble for various ways to cut costs to maintain as many services as possible, and that will of course include doing it on the backs of their own employees.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I want to commend and compliment my colleague from London Centre on her very exact analysis and carefully

thought through remarks that clearly point out that indeed this government has no interest in real bargaining. What they want to do is to make sure that those working women and men and their families pay the price of their download and their tax cut. That's the message the member for London Centre is sending out.

I might point out that there's no doubt in anyone's mind that contrary to what the parliamentary assistant may be saying about the fact that there has to be meaningful bargaining and if there's bad-faith bargaining, it all has to start over, the reality is, and the members opposite should know, as the member for London Centre does, that winning a case of bargaining in bad faith is very difficult. It requires an awful lot of clear-cut evidence. This is not an easy threshold to cross.

Therefore, knowing that, an employer who has decided to use the benefit of the Dispute Resolution Commission, which of course will be the right-wing handmaiden of this government in terms of stripping collective agreements, can get to that commission quite readily, quite easily, and the chances of them getting caught out are relatively slim. We all know that. That's why, quite frankly, it's so insulting for this government to continue to say, as my colleague from London Centre has pointed out, that they care about having meaningful collective bargaining.

You have no such desire. That's not what Bill 136 is about. It allows you to spin that facade out there, but the reality is that there won't be any bargaining. There's going to be gutting: gutting of collective agreements, lowering of wages, lowering of benefits, lowering of standard of living for those families, for those women and men who provide the public service to the rest of us in this province.

Lastly, let me just say, because the member for London Centre did point out about who's going to get appointed to this commission, that for the parliamentary assistant to suggest how ridiculous it would be for the person running his barbecue to be appointed to the commission, don't forget that your Solicitor General, Bob Runciman, appointed his own campaign manager to the parole board.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I would like to add my comments in response to the very thoughtful remarks made by the member for London Centre.

Certainly she touched on a number of areas, and I think did it in a very quiet but strong way, in the sense of recognizing that there seems to be this extraordinary need to rush the legislation through. We know about the rule changes. We've seen what's happened with that. We're sitting here again this evening discussing this bill, and one expects the government is keen to get into second reading as quickly as possible. But we think it's important that this bill be discussed in as long a fashion as possible so that the truth can be out there.

The fact is that the Dispute Resolution Commission, despite what the member for Niagara Falls says, is clearly a stacked deck. It's setting things up so that the person who will be appointed by the government will clearly be appointed with the government's intentions in mind. That seems very, very much the case.

**1900**

The fact is, this all comes back to the same issue, the issue that goes back to the beginning, in early January of this year, during mega-week I guess we called it, when the downloading process began. When that downloading process began, it became very clear that this government was intent on transferring a number of responsibilities which have become very clearly seen as a massive downloading on to the municipalities, putting the municipalities into a position where they absolutely have no choice but to make some tough decisions.

This government would like to say this is what the municipalities want and this is what the municipalities have asked for. The fact is, we know from the meeting this past week in Toronto with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that they have asked the government to withdraw this bill. They have asked the government not to set up a situation where confrontation is the order of the day. They recognize that they're going through very difficult times. They do not want this difficulty added on with Bill 136. I suggest it would be in the best interests of the government to listen to AMO and to withdraw this piece of legislation right now.

**Mrs Boyd:** I thank the members of the House who have commented: the member for Niagara Falls, the members for Ottawa Centre, Hamilton Centre and Port Arthur.

I would say to the member for Niagara Falls that every time he speaks on this bill, he shows his naïveté. That is one of the real concerns I have. You seem to have some belief in things that can be shown not to be the case. I'll give you the example of his speech yesterday afternoon where he talked about, "You shouldn't worry about this because it's only the first contract that's going to be determined." Right?

We all know that the first contract sets the basis for all subsequent negotiation. It's the most serious place to start. For this member to stand up and say: "What do you think we're going to do? Appoint our friends?" the answer is yes. That's what you're doing every day, so of course we expect you to do that.

You could build into this bill a requirement that no one could sit on that commission if they had any party affiliation. You could build into this bill a strong conflict-of-interest provision for the members of this commission. You could build a lot of safeguards into this bill if you really want impartial bargainers. The reality is that the current process of both parties agreeing to a list of impartial arbitrators was determined because we know that's impossible; you know it's impossible to build faith on the part of those who see themselves at the mercy of arbitrariness. That's what will happen with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I'm proud tonight to stand in support of one of the finest people ever to occupy the office of the Minister of Labour in Ontario.

Understanding the need for legislation to respond to the unprecedented restructuring which is occurring in local government, in our hospitals and in our school boards, an approach which provides a process that is fair to employ-

ees and employers as this restructuring takes place, with arbitration awards taxpayers can afford and assurance that essential services aren't interrupted: These are the key principles the Minister of Labour has sought to address with Bill 136.

In the interests of the almost half-million people who work on behalf of the public in Ontario, we must have a process that is fair and consistent and minimizes uncertainty for these employees. The public services they provide are essential, and too often we take little notice of the people who make them possible.

In Wellington we are very grateful for the jobs our nurses, firefighters, police officers and municipal workers perform. The demand for health care services has increased the workload of our nurses. They are asked to do more, yet they undertake their responsibilities with professionalism and provide the highest standard of care and compassion for their patients. Our firefighters and police officers are prepared to risk their own lives to protect ours and to keep our communities safe and orderly. I think of our municipal workers, who are sometimes expected to be available at a moment's notice; for example, to fix a broken watermain in the middle of the night in January in freezing temperatures.

The collective efforts of all of these people contribute to the health, stability and infrastructure of our communities. We must do all we can to preserve the integrity and quality of these services today and in the future.

All members of this House are aware of the serious financial problem our province faces today. Upon taking office in 1995, the government had to deal with the reality of a $100-billion debt. Since then, progress has been made in reducing our deficit, but we still have a long way to go before the deficit is eliminated and we can begin to pay down some of this debt, which will have substantially increased, despite our best efforts, by the year 2000.

The government cannot ignore this problem, as the opposition parties in this House from time to time seem to suggest. To ignore it would be utterly irresponsible. It would mean a very real potential for a scarcity of important services for future generations as the debt spirals upward, handcuffing the ability of future governments to provide services like health care, education and ensuring community safety.

To meet this challenge, the government has embarked on a course of action to streamline its services and those of the greater public sector. The goal is to deliver the best services and programs to the people of Ontario at the lowest possible cost. As a result, unprecedented school board, municipal and hospital restructuring is taking place across the province this year. To illustrate the complexity of the challenge we face, the restructuring of municipalities, school boards and health care facilities will involve the coordination of as many as 3,300 collective agreements. School boards are being reduced from 129 to 72. The number of municipalities will be reduced to 650 from about 815 as of January 1998.

This is a time of necessary but potentially disruptive change. In an effort to manage the labour aspects of this change fairly and to ensure that during this crucial transition period there continues to be a reliable delivery of important services, the minister has proposed the adoption of Bill 136.

I'd like to quote from an editorial on Bill 136 that appeared in the Windsor Star on June 13. The editorial states:

"With almost 400,000 public sector workers involved, the smooth running of the province depends on how well the provisions in Bill 136 are accepted and implemented. And implemented they must be. Although the transition is destined to be complicated and contentious, Ontario can't afford even one more year of government inefficiency."

I agree. We simply can no longer afford to ignore the deficit and the debt and their effects on our economy or the threat they pose to important services that people rely on now and in the future. We must turn the tide and reorganize the way we deliver services. We must have a framework to deal with the numerous labour issues that will develop because of this restructuring.

Bill 136 proposes the establishment of two bodies to assist in bringing order and fairness to the labour complexities associated with amalgamating school boards, hospitals and municipalities.

The first one, the proposed Labour Relations Transition Commission, is temporary. Its role is to help resolve labour relations issues associated with the public sector restructuring, such as the structure of bargaining units, union representation and seniority.

Second, the Dispute Resolution Commission will have the ability to use various dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation-arbitration, to help resolve outstanding issues in the fire, police and hospital sectors if negotiated agreements between the parties are not possible. At the request of either party, the Dispute Resolution Commission will have the temporary power to deal with disputes arising from the negotiation of a first contract following an amalgamation or merger.

Ideally, it's always preferable for the parties involved to reach an agreement through discussion and negotiation. Failing this, it's incumbent upon the provincial government to have a process in place to settle disputes fairly and promptly. Otherwise, with the scale of the restructuring we're going to be experiencing, labour disagreements could cause an enormous amount of disruption across the province. There are no winners if such a scenario unfolds. Employees delivering services and the public will suffer.

Under the proposed Bill 136, the Labour Relations Transition Commission might step in in circumstances where employers, employees and unions cannot reach an agreement on how employees would be grouped together for collective bargaining purposes. In such a situation, the Labour Relations Transition Commission would decide. In other cases where the parties cannot come to an agreement on seniority issues, the Labour Relations Transition Commission may dovetail the seniority lists of the existing bargaining units.

The Dispute Resolution Commission that is being proposed in Bill 136 would be permanent and is intended to

improve upon the current system of arbitration. Currently, arbitrators are selected in a very ad hoc manner, which makes it difficult for decision-making to be consistent and fair across the board. Concerns have been raised that the current system of arbitration in some cases actually discourages negotiated settlements because unions and employers tend to rely on the arbitrator to impose a solution. Decisions on awards have sometimes been excessive, without due consideration to the budgets and ability to pay of municipalities, hospitals and school boards.

**1910**

To address the shortfalls in the current system, the Minister of Labour has modelled the proposed Dispute Resolution Commission so that greater emphasis is placed on negotiation and mediation. If Bill 136 is adopted as proposed, the Dispute Resolution Commission would have the ability to apply a binding dispute resolution process following an amalgamation or merger in the broader public sector if a negotiated agreement can't be reached and one of the parties requests such an intervention.

I want to emphasize again that a labour relations framework is needed to avoid the potential for massive disruption in the delivery of services to the public that might occur if labour negotiations stall. We need mechanisms like the ones proposed to effectively and efficiently deal with the labour relations issues that will result from the amalgamations taking place across the province.

The minister has indicated that the Dispute Resolution Commission would be composed of impartial, neutral and fairminded individuals headed by a chief commissioner. I believe it's essential that commissioners who are chosen to sit on a Dispute Resolution Commission have the confidence of employers, employees and union representatives, and above all they should be fair and balanced in their judgements. I support the opinion expressed in the Windsor Star editorial that I referred to earlier, which states. "These two commissions must be fair and impartial and those who sit on the commissions must have the appropriate academic and legal qualifications to do so."

The Minister of Labour has indicated that this bill is not written in stone, that it's evolving and that the government is interested and open to constructive suggestions to improve the bill. She invited labour leaders who had expressed their concerns through the media to meet with her and discuss their views and ideas. Regrettably, they refused. At the urging of the heads of the labour movement, the member for Hamilton Centre last week asked the Premier to meet with labour leaders. The Premier said okay. Again, the labour leaders refused to meet.

The leadership of certain unions seems to be more interested in playing games than entering into a constructive, frank discussion with the government regarding the needs and interests of their membership. In this regard, they are doing an extreme disservice to their members. At a fundamental level, they are not meeting the responsibilities that union members have entrusted them with. I hope they will reconsider and enter into meaningful discussions with the government on Bill 136.

I know this period of change is going to be difficult, especially for people employed in the broader public sector. Reorganizations are never easy, and some employees will suffer job dislocations. During this process, it's my hope, and I have absolute confidence, that the minister will ensure that this transition is handled fairly, equitably and with due regard to the employees involved and the public, who we are all privileged to serve.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Patten:** The member for Wellington has from time to time exercised a degree of independence of thought, but I don't see any evidence of that in his speech this evening.

He suggests that people ignore debt. We disagree with your way of going about dealing with the debt, and so does Mr Klein. You don't give a tax break when you're trying to fight a deficit — that's all we're saying — because you get yourself into trouble like you've gotten yourself into right now. You're in trouble because you're chasing dollars and restructuring on the basis of reducing your payments to the local municipalities, to school boards, to the hospitals or whatever. That's what's got you into all this trouble. You know it, and so does every member of your caucus, because you get the feedback when you go home. One of your members said this afternoon – I won't mention who it was – "Who else can we alienate today?" I respect his candour.

The member for Wellington said that the Premier offered to meet with the labour leaders. It's my understanding that he has not invited them to meet with him. They said they would meet with him at any time, and he has not invited them to meet with him heretofore. If that's true, they would like to do it.

In terms of the police, the nurses, the municipal workers, if you think so highly of them, why would this legislation begin with such negative assumptions? The police say that the commission you talked about, the Dispute Resolution Commission, will be a permanent change for them. It's a negative assumption about them. They have no choice of an independent, mutually agreed upon arbitrator, and you know it. And the firefighters have never gone on strike.

**Mr Christopherson:** I want to say to the member for Wellington that if he's looking to find out who's playing games in all this, he need look no further than the seats to his immediate left where the Premier and the Minister of Labour sit. If you want to talk about games, first of all let's talk about the respect that elected leaders in the working community deserve. Over 2,000 of them came here and only asked that there be a representative to receive their alternative to your Bill 136, not one of you showed up, not the Premier, not the Minister of Labour, not one of you sitting here tonight. None of you had the decency to at least come out and receive a proposal for an alternative to the chaos you're going to cause as a result of Bill 136. If you want to talk about meaningful dialogue, start with the kind of approach your government has had in the way you've treated labour leaders in this province and treated the workers themselves.

I want to mention to the member that he talked about arbitration. This government, all of you keep talking about the fact that the arbitration is still in place and why is everybody upset? Everybody's upset because what's lost is the independence of arbitrators.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Yes, it is. Arbitrators are now chosen by agreement, where both parties agree on who it will be. That's the way it works and that's why it does work, because both sides say: "We think this person will make a fair judgement. We will live by their decision."

That's not what's going to happen now. The person who makes the decision, which can't be taken to judicial review, by the way, is chosen by your cabinet. We know damn well they're going to be ideologically on side with you, which means stripping collective agreements, getting ready to privatize those jobs and lowering the standard of working people in this province.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I'm pleased to comment on the points that were made by our colleague. Two things really have to be put on the record, because again we're hearing from the other side, very consistently, this rhetoric. There are no specifics. It's all generalities. It's pie-in-the-sky negativity.

Let's deal with some of the facts. On July 24, Gord Wilson — yes, the same Gord Wilson who stood up in this House and engaged in a stunt and caused this House to close for about 30 minutes while the galleries were cleared. On July 24, the minister, in writing, followed up on a phone offer to meet with Mr Wilson, and he said no.

The suggestion is that municipalities are opposed to this. The comment was made that at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference this week, the mood was very much opposed to this bill. Let me read you something in the handwriting of the new president of AMO himself:

"Yesterday I spoke to Premier Mike Harris concerning Bill 136. This is legislation that municipalities asked for. Delegates to this convention expressed concern that the timetable was too swift. They felt that more discussion and consultation was necessary." He goes on to say, "AMO will be meeting with the government in quick order to bring forward their express concerns, but AMO remains committed to the principles it originally espoused and are found in Bill 136." That's what the new president of AMO said.

They'll stand here and suggest that because they say it's so, that makes it so. But they don't talk about the fact that there are offers outstanding to the union leaders, that the minister meets with these people at any time. The reality is, they're the ones who would rather engage in game-playing. We're committed to a productive, realistic, constructive dialogue on this bill and on all other bills.

**1920**

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I would like to take a few moments to comment on the member for Wellington's statements, especially what he said about being willing to meet with municipalities and to explain the downloading and the changes.

In the riding I represent in Cornwall and in S-D-G, tongues have been hanging out to meet with one of the ministers or the Premier to have them explain the downloading that's taking place. In the city of Cornwall there's $18.5 million, according to the province's own figures, and in the counties there's $18.9 million. They are doing everything possible to try to meet the goals the government would like them to achieve, but they've already downsized and cut everything they can cut. It's cut right to the bone at the moment. They were at the AMO conference, and I don't think they had any luck meeting with anyone here.

I also met with the fire departments, the police departments and the public employees, and they sure don't want a province-wide strike. They'd like to try to iron this out ahead of time and solve this peacefully, but unless there's further consultation, that will not happen.

I know it's not as rosy as we think. I happen to have had a lot of years in municipal politics and I know that municipalities are very careful in the way they spend their money. To achieve another 3% decrease, like the minister has said, I think is going to be very difficult. Anyway, the key to the whole thing is more consultation between the province and the municipalities, something we've not been blessed with.

**Mr Arnott:** I want to thank the members for Ottawa West, Hamilton West, my colleague from Scarborough East and the member for Cornwall for their constructive comments relative to what I said.

There were two issues that came up that I want to respond to: first, the independence of the people who'll be appointed to these commissions. I think we can only prove that over time, and I'm very confident that people will be appointed who will be fairminded and impartial, and you will see that we will set up an impartial process.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** If only you could be the arbitrator, Ted.

**Mr Arnott:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Second, the matter of dialogue: Clearly we need more dialogue, and clearly the Premier has indicated an interest in meeting with the labour leaders. The Minister of Labour has indicated a long-standing interest and continues to meet with labour leaders from time to time. I hope the labour leaders take these offers and respond in a constructive way. That's really all we can hope for. I know the minister is very interested in hearing the constructive suggestions that may be coming forward in the House during the course of this debate in the opposition, and we look forward to hearing those from the opposition side.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I won't pretend I'm happy about rising to participate in this debate. I'm not happy about the fact that this bill is here. I'm not happy about the fact that we are debating it in an evening sitting, which constitutes a second day of sitting on this one day of August 27, 1997, and that under the new rules we now are able to have two days in one and this government can ram through its agenda and its draconian legislation even faster without the accountability of having to

come into question period other than every other technical day.

But I want to set out my concerns about this legislation. I'm afraid the member for Wellington will not find them constructive suggestions because I don't think there's anything constructive to be found in this bill. I want to set out exactly and simply what Bill 136 is all about. As complex as the act may appear to be, as many groups as this act affects, there are a very few basic bottom lines to it all.

First of all, this act will lead to government-appointed arbitrators making the decisions about public sector contracts. Second, those arbitrators must follow guidelines set out by government, and the ability to pay will be the key factor in any arbitration. Third, the government, through its own grant system, will control the ability to pay.

Whether it is a municipality that's going to be forced to absorb at least $667 million in additional costs at the same time as it has to pick up the offload of this government's social programs, or whether it's a hospital facing the financial restraints of what government will give it as it cuts hospital budgets by $17 billion, or whether it's a school board that will now be totally controlled by the provincial government's decisions about funding, there is not a single public sector employer who will be free of the financial restraints that are going to be imposed by the Mike Harris government.

That's the ultimate bottom line in this. Mike Harris and his government are going to be in total control. They don't have the courage to actually sit down at the bargaining table and face employees face to face, but they are going to be controlling the whole show from the back rooms in which they operate most effectively, because that's the style of this government. The style of the government is to force through their agenda and use the front men to deliver it. They never do it themselves.

Whether it is the hospital restructuring demolition crew going out and shutting down hospitals in communities across the province, or whether it's the education minister hiding behind his education implementation team that has no power to do anything that the minister hasn't already decided, or whether it is now to be the public sector bargaining done by appointed arbitrators who will no longer have the freedom to arbitrate fairly, they will have to follow the government's directions on how to arbitrate. I know for sure that the government's directions are not going to have much of a focus on the fairness of the settlement, because it's just the opposite.

I've looked through the criteria for arbitrators set out in this bill. I didn't find the word "fairness" anywhere in there. I didn't find "fair and equitable settlement" to be a factor that the arbitrators should give some consideration to. There is one factor that leads off, and that is the ability to pay, number one, and it will be the ultimate and defining factor in any arbitration done in the public sector.

There are some others, and one struck me in particular. The commission set up to resolve disputes, this appointed commission, can look at how services might be reduced in light of the decisions that are made about salaries, with the understanding — and this is stated in the legislation; I can't believe laws are being created to put these kinds of constraints on the bargaining process. They are to look at the impact of their decisions on salaries with the understanding that funding and taxation cannot be increased to protect services. That's about as clear as it gets.

Mr Arbitrator, that's a warning to you. If you have any sense that justice might require some increase in salaries, be forewarned. If you should be tempted to look at a fair salary settlement, you have to know, first of all, whether that is going to mean fewer nurses or fewer policemen or fewer firefighters in a context where the government makes it clear in law itself that there will be no more money going into the pot to pay for any salary settlement.

This is obviously and blatantly a back-door way for the government to freeze public sector salaries at best and, more likely, to strip contracts to find the dollars it wants to pay for its income tax cut for those who are making considerably more money than the people affected by this legislation.

This is a government that likes to talk about efficiencies as if efficiency were some great god. Bill 136 shows us very clearly what the so-called efficiencies are. They are savings that will be made on the backs of public sector workers. That's really what this bill is all about. That's why this bill is here, because the government needs control of negotiations so that contracts can be stripped, so that government can save the dollars it wants to save.

The government says, of course, that that's not what all this is about. We've just heard the member for Wellington put forward the government's position, that this is a temporary measure that's needed, a temporary measure, ironically, to deal with the chaos the government itself has created, a War Measures Act — nothing less — to deal with a war that the government wanted and that the government set out to create.

The member for Wellington says, "There are some 3,300 collective agreements that have to be harmonized because of all the amalgamations going on in the public sector, so that's a necessary part of change." That's astounding to me because there is no evidence of any kind. The member for Scarborough East talks about specifics, "Let's get specific." Show me anywhere, in any amalgamation you are proposing to carry out, one shred of evidence that shows there are any savings to be achieved through the amalgamation itself. There is no evidence of that.

The only dollars to be saved from these amalgamations that this government is forcing are to be saved through cutting services or cutting salaries or both. The government is creating the conditions where it needs to be able to slash salaries. It's not a process of constructive and necessary change; it is a process of clearly dealing with chaos that this government has created as an excuse, I believe, to make the cuts in services and in salaries which it knew was the only way to bring about the cost savings it was looking for.

**1930**

I suggest if the government really believes this is temporary, the government members ask themselves one very basic question: If it's actually temporary, if all you needed was your War Measures Act to deal with the chaos of amalgamations, why are there two parts to the act? Why is there a permanent Dispute Resolution Commission being set up? There is clearly only one answer to that: Because this isn't temporary. This is part of an all-out, permanent, ongoing attack on collective bargaining and on organized labour.

I suggest to the government that this kind of attack on the collective bargaining process will ultimately prove to have been very shortsighted, because all the evidence, I say to the member for Scarborough East who likes to look for specifics in evidence, points to the fact that the majority of public sector collective agreements are settled without recourse to either arbitration or strike action. In the process of those local settlements there is a host of other issues, local issues that are resolved amicably and constructively and creatively and in an atmosphere which produces typically, most often — not always, but most often — a better working relationship between employer and employee. All of this will be lost in the environment the government has created.

As so many have noted, the association of municipalities itself, I remind the members who are using quotations in the media today, in a vote that took place on Monday, a large majority of the members of the association of municipalities said, "Stop and withdraw this bill until we can have some sense of how to get it right," and these are the very people the bill was supposed to help.

I don't want to get involved in any kind of dialogue, in the limited amount of time to speak, or any amount of debate about whether or not the Premier said he would meet and when he extended his invitation and how long he stalled and said, "No, meet with the Minister of Labour; I didn't really mean meet with me," or whether he actually put in writing his offer. All I know is we're already debating Bill 136. There was no offer from the Premier to meet before the bill was tabled and the bill was introduced for debate. The sheer hypocrisy of the government suggesting it would seriously enter into negotiations when it was already ready to debate the bill is rather breathtaking. I don't know how you can pretend to be serious about negotiations when you dump a bill like this with no negotiations, with no discussions with the very people it is going to affect.

Why would public sector workers, let alone municipal employers or anyone else, believe this government is serious about negotiation? The record of this government is one of bullying and autocratic "We don't care what you think, we're going to do what we want do" approaches to government. It is truly as breathtaking as Justice Archie Campbell has suggested in comparing the Mike Harris government to the autocratic government of King Henry VIII.

Let us not forget at any point that this is the government that forced through the very amalgamations that they need this War Measures Act to deal with. They forced through the megacity amalgamation despite the opposition of 76% of the citizens of the community. They're imposing school board amalgamations, emasculating local boards, creating chaos in educational governance, and they're doing it in spite of the fact that they heard over and over and over again, not just from employers and employees alike but from parents and students themselves, the cry to slow down and get it right. But that is not this government's style.

In hospitals they're forcing closures. They call them amalgamations, but they're closures. Let's call it by its name. They say this act is here to deal with the chaos of the staffing and the contracts that will come when we have these hospital closures, but there is nothing in this act that is going to deal with the chaos that's created for patients — just the opposite. This government doesn't care. They just want to do it, get it done fast, steamroll over anyone who gets in the way, whether it is policemen or firefighters or nurses or school custodians or secretaries or thousands of citizens. Then they'll get some appointed henchmen to go and do the dirty work on the front lines and they'll say, "We didn't do it."

They are the masters of "Dump the blame on someone else, offload to the municipalities, and if they can't find the efficiencies, they will have to look somewhere else." They are not allowed to raise taxes because they're not doing a good enough job of finding efficiencies that they would even have to raise taxes. Well, efficiencies for municipalities really means cutting services, but when the municipalities face the reality of tax hikes or cutting services, the government will say, "It's not our fault; the municipality did it," just like they will lay all the blame on school boards when the minister controls all the funding.

Then they say: "Maybe there is going to be a problem. Maybe you really will have to cut services as you go through these amalgamations, as you deal with the offloading of all of these costs, so we'll help you out. We'll help you out by creating legislation which will gut salaries and create confrontation and labour strife in every community across this province." I say, "Some help. Thanks a lot."

I just think we have to remember that when the chaos begins, it is the Harris government that did this. The Harris government set the stage, they created the puppets and they are pulling the strings, whether it is of the Health Services Restructuring Commission or the Education Improvement Commission or now the Dispute Resolution Commission to be set up by this bill, whether it is services or salaries that are going to end up slashed, or both. Be sure where the blame truly lies: with a government that is still desperate to find $5 billion to pay for the tax cut and doesn't care who gets hurt in the giant cash grab that the government has launched.

The government will say: "The bill really is here to help. We haven't dictated new process. We haven't stripped rights. What are you talking about? We've given choices to the employers and employees. Look at all the choices that are in this bill. If you don't have the right to

strike, if you have your disputes resolved through arbitration, you still have the right to go to private arbitrators." Some choice. It's not really a choice when the parties have to pay for the luxury of having private, non-government-appointed arbitrators.

Then there are the sectors that do have the right to strike. Theoretically the government hasn't taken away that right. Theoretically the parties can still agree to resolve their issues through local collective bargaining with the power of sanction, except they only have 30 days. Then either party can say they want to ensure that rather than risk a strike, they are going to go to the Dispute Resolution Commission to have this resolved. I honestly don't know what school board can risk the possibility of a strike, given the financial constraints in which they're expected to negotiate.

There will be no good-faith bargaining undertaken under this scenario. There is absolutely no chance left in this legislation for local collective bargaining to go ahead and to be successful. The police association has already been told that their employers will not negotiate until this bill is law. We know it's another fact of this legislation that no arbitration or grievance process that's under way right now can be concluded once this bill becomes law. So already all fairness and all due process are going to end with the passage of Bill 136.

It's no wonder, as I look back on it — and maybe I didn't quite understand it other than as a simple insult at the time — I realize that it is no wonder that the Harris government had to make sure that firefighters did not have the right to strike. It was a right they had not exercised in 50 years. They had voluntarily essentially waived the right to strike. It looked like it was a little bit of in-your-face to the firefighters that they created legislation to take away that right to strike that had never been used, but I guess they knew that their actions with Bill 136 were going to push even firefighters right up against the wall.

I want to just touch for a few moments on a specific group within the legislation that I have some concern about as critic for education, and that is school board employees. We have not seen the legislation affecting school teachers yet. As my colleague has said, we are expecting that legislation very shortly. I'm quite sure, given the teacher-bashing mentality of the Minister of Education, he is more than ready to declare war on teachers across this province.

The school personnel who are affected directly by Bill 136 are school custodians and school secretaries. They are the people whose actual jobs this government really wants. This government wants to privatize, to contract out those jobs. They wanted to do it in the first place with Bill 104. They wanted the education commission to tell boards how they will contract out these jobs. They backed away from it because of the uproar from parents, but now they're finding back-door ways to force the contracting out.

How do you save money by contracting out the work of an employee who is making, on average, less than $24,000 a year? I guess the only way you save money by contracting out those jobs is if you're prepared to pay poverty wages. I think that's probably a good summary of this government's backroom negotiating position in the development of Bill 136. "If you won't take a poverty wage, we'll contract out your position. We'll find someone who is prepared to work cheap, most likely temporary help or part-timers." That's the efficiency factor for this government. It's a very efficient way of doing things, because if you have temporary, part-time work you don't have to pay benefits, so you get a double saving: cheaper wages and no benefits.

**1940**

Parents made it very clear that they do not want their children's welfare entrusted to temporary help. They don't want dial-a-cleaners coming in as custodians in their schools, they don't want somebody from the secretarial pool. They want people who know their children, people who are concerned and caring for their children. They consider the custodians and the secretaries to be valuable members of the school team. They want knowledgeable, caring and full-time staff. I suggest to you that kids are not going to be served by the maximum efficiency boys with their wage slashing policies embodied in Bill 136.

I guess I come to the question of who actually is going to be served by Bill 136. I find it very difficult to find anybody other than the government and the government's agenda that is going to be served by Bill 136.

It's quite clear that employees are going to be hurt, no doubt about that. This is about cutting wages. But so are students going to be hurt. Students are going to be hurt because they are not going to end up with the full-time, knowledgeable, concerned school staff to maintain their schools and provide the custodial care and the secretarial services.

I think patients in hospitals are going to be hurt by Bill 136, patients who need professional and committed nursing staff and who don't need constant labour strife. I think just as somebody has said that a teacher's working condition is a student's learning condition, it's equally true that a nurse's working condition is a patient's survival condition.

I don't think that citizens who need municipal stability in essential services of police and fire and garbage collection are going to be served by Bill 136 and the strife that is going to be.

I know that women are not going to be served by Bill 136. There are pay equity provisions, seemingly minor provisions in this bill, that say if you're a public sector employer and you haven't got a pay equity plan yet, you don't have to have one unless somebody complains. Unless some employee, who may be concerned about the job security of making that complaint, has the courage to make a complaint, they don't have to have pay equity and those who don't have the plans now are the ones who are going to be rewarded for not having acted to deal fairly with women in the workplace.

This is not even going to work for employers. It may make it easier to get out of the collective bargaining situation and send an irresolvable problem to this government-appointed commission, but I think the labour strife and the

tension that is going to result from this bill will make public sector management even more difficult.

I urge the government to withdraw this bill, to set aside its cost-cutting agenda and to have some faith that good, local bargaining can still come up with better answers than those that are dictated by a government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Christopherson:** I want to commend the remarks of the member for Fort William and to key in and focus on her comments about — and I wrote it down — the bullying and autocratic ways of this government.

Certainly this government likes to say that they've had consultation and they've talked to people. In fact, they're spending time talking about all these meetings that they're inviting people to. For the record, let me just read a letter that was forwarded to the minister — I have two letters here — dated July 25 from the Ontario Federation of Labour, signed by Gordon Wilson, the president. It reads in part:

"Dear Minister,

"I have received your incredible letter of 24 July 1997 in which you repeat your false assertion that I have rejected your invitation to meet to discuss Bill 136.

"In this same letter, you falsely allege that in drafting Bill 136 you listened to the 'expressed concerns' of organized labour, when you know full well that Bill 136 was drafted in total secrecy from the labour movement. It was sprung upon us June 3 as yet another full-fledged fait accompli.

"For the public record, I have, as you know full well, written to Premier Harris and to you on July 22 requesting a meeting with the Premier and those ministers he deems appropriate, which I presume would include yourself, to explore alternatives to Bill 136."

Another letter dated July 29 reads in part:

"Thank you for your letter dated July 25. I must say that I'm very surprised at your refusal to meet with us to discuss" — this is to the Premier — "alternatives to Bill 136. I remind you of your public statement of June 7 as reported in the Star.

"I would invite CUPE, OPSEU, the nurses and teachers to sign a similar deal the doctors signed. It's on the table right now. Come and see me."

They did. He didn't show up and the Premier didn't agree to meet with those labour leaders, the representatives of the working people, until we shamed him into it right here in this House last week.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Fort William's comments. Again, a very consistent theme; again, we're hearing a lot about a whole bunch of other issues that have nothing to do with this bill. We hear talk about education reform. We hear talk about Who Does What. We hear talk about taxation changes. We consistently hear from the other side a litany of woe, that somehow because there are other bills that they disagree with, this bill is inappropriate. We heard it earlier today on Bill 148 and we're hearing it again this evening on Bill 136.

In the same breath the member suggests that AMO is opposed to Bill 136, and yet goes on to say that the workers will somehow be constrained in their ability to have fair collective bargaining. Why would the member not have comfort that if in fact municipalities have said they don't intend to use this legislation at all, then obviously it will be the status quo in their collective bargaining? You can't have it both ways. The bottom line is either there is the spectre that the employers will not bargain in good faith or they will. You have said you believe some members of AMO will not be utilizing this legislation. Therefore, presumably nothing will change in their bargaining. How you can then go on to fearmonger that somehow we have anything to fear or the employees have anything to fear is quite incredible.

The fact of the matter is 85% of all of the collective bargaining agreements are arrived at amicably in the public sector. But that's still short of the 95% amicable acceptance by both parties in the private sector. It's that 15% in the face of the restructuring that will be taking place, the municipal reform — every taxpayer and every employee in the city deserves to know that there will be every mechanism provided to both parties to ensure that bargaining is fair and that the appropriate collective decisions are arrived at.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I would like to congratulate the member for Fort William on her comments, which have truly dissected Bill 136. As she has put it on the floor, the members of AMO have suggested, in a vote that took place yesterday, to the Premier, to the cabinet, to withdraw this bill.

As a member, I know that a good number of my mayors, reeves and councillors are there. I'm hearing the same thing from them when I go home. I look over at the Conservative benches there and I ask you, what are you hearing when you know that the majority of your representatives of the municipalities from your ridings have voted to have this bill withdrawn? I ask the folks over there what they're hearing, because we hear every day from the firemen, as the member for Fort William, has indicated. I hear from the policemen, the local nurses, the local municipal politicians, as I've just indicated, who have just suggested at AMO that they want this withdrawn, they want Bill 136 withdrawn.

Again, I put forth to the members across the way, what are you hearing when you go home? Are you not worried that people out there are saying that they are upset with the Mike Harris agenda, with the speed that he's moving forward? People out there are saying that he's not getting it right because of the speed that legislation is moving forward.

We're looking at the New Jersey model when we look at what Mike Harris is doing. They're concerned because it's not working there and they're suggesting that it's not working here. Again, I would suggest to all of the Conservative members to take heed of what the member for Fort William has said and listen to some of the constituents that we face on a regular basis, listen to your local municipal politicians and what they're saying about Bill 136.

**1950**

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'm pleased to be able to respond to the comments made by the member for Fort William. I think what really is key here in her whole discussion on this particular legislation is about how the government tries to paint this as being fair. I think we really need to try to figure out what it is that this government really thinks is fair. Is it fair for a government to say, "We're going to take away the ability for employees, in a case where you need to go off to arbitration, to choose your own arbitrator in agreement with your employer"? Is it fair that the government appoints the arbitrator so that in the end, basically, the friends of the government make the decisions about what will happen in collective bargaining?

Is it fair, in a case where an arbitrator makes a bad decision against either an employer or, more than likely, the employees, that the employees don't have access to judicial review? Is that fair? Everybody else in the province has the right to judicial review in the event that there's a bad decision having to do with any of the laws we pass here in this Legislature. But this government says: "Oh, no. Workers, we want to treat them fairly. They shouldn't have the right of every other person within the province and they shouldn't have the right to go to judicial review."

Is it fair that a government says that employees of the public sector, by way of this act, will not have access to the wage protection fund, the diminished fund because they've already diminished it from before that? Is it fair? No. Is it fair that the government says, "Workers in the public sector who are transferred to the private sector in cases of privatization will lose pay equity"? Is that fair? Is it fair that women who are paid less than men for the same job continue to be paid less and that this government perpetuates that and actually tries to say it's good? Is that fair?

This legislation isn't fair, and the more quickly the government accepts that, maybe the more quickly we can get on with this debate.

**Mrs McLeod:** I thank my colleagues from Kenora, Hamilton Centre and Cochrane North for their sharing of similar concerns to those I've expressed today.

As to the member for Scarborough East, I realize that listening skills are not ones which he either has or chooses to develop, but had he chosen to listen somewhat, he'd have known that my comments were indeed about Bill 136 and, at the same time, about all the rest of this government's agenda. Bill 136 is the underpinning of everything else this government wants to do, and the member for Scarborough East knows that full well.

The comments of the member for Scarborough East underline my sense of almost the futility of participating in a debate on legislation that this government brings forward. This is clearly a government which doesn't care, which is going through an exercise of defending what it wants to do when in fact it's going to go ahead and do it no matter how many concerns are expressed, no matter how many people are raising those concerns, no matter how little evidence there is that this government is on the right track, no matter how much evidence there is that it is clearly on the wrong track. This is a government that won't even slow down, even when they have voice after voice after voice of responsible leaders in our communities saying: "At least slow down. Take the time to get it right. Don't create sheer chaos."

This is a government that believes in confrontation, invites confrontation, in fact needs confrontation to be able to go ahead and do what it wants to do. They pride themselves on creating a confrontation, on pitting themselves against people, in some bizarre sense that that's how you define the strength of government, and then they pit people against each other, whether it's employers against employees or school board against school board or hospital against hospital.

I simply say to this government, to those who maybe genuinely believe the government's line that this is all about constructive change, that if you really want to bring about change, you can't do it without the people who have to implement the change coming along with you. You cannot implement change and improve services, anybody over there who has that in his agenda, without having the deliverers of the service on side. Tragically, people will pay a terrible price before the government learns that lesson.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bisson:** I have but 20 minutes in this particular debate. Unfortunately, this bill is very voluminous in the number of things it attempts to do — does do, because I imagine the government is not going to take seriously the concerns of most working people in this province and probably won't do a heck of a lot of amending to this legislation. None the less, we will try to set out to the government some of the arguments that we think need to be made to find some justice for the working men and women of this province.

You always have to ask yourself this question: Why is it that a government puts forward this particular bill, Bill 136? Very simply, they're putting it forward because this government has chosen a course that is going to give the taxpayers of this province a $5-billion tax reduction — that's the cost of this thing over the next number of years.

**Mr Gilchrist:** That's not true.

**Mr Bisson:** Not true? The government says it's not giving a tax break. This government is delusional. They don't believe even what they are doing. They can't even accept when they've done something wrong. They can't accept if they've done anything at all. It's the member for Scarborough East yet again, who is his usual self in this place.

The point I make is simply that this government has made a decision, and the decision they have made is that they're going to give taxpayers in this province a tax break of 30% on the provincial share of the income tax bill we get every year. That's a decision they made. We understand that. They campaigned on that in the last election and they've got to live or die by that decision. But with every action, just like in physics, there's an opposite and equal reaction. When you make a decision to take

revenue away from the province, what happens? The government has to figure out a way to save money.

One of the decisions they've made, I think a very costly one, both for services for the people of Ontario and, I would argue, for the political capital of this government, is that to try to offset the $5-billion tax break, they are going to download services from the province to the municipalities. The municipal taxpayers then become responsible for taking on a number of services that the province always had the responsibility of carrying out.

They know that the minute they transfer all these services to municipalities, there has to be a whole rejigging of how those services are delivered. Let's just take one example. If you happen to transfer over, let's say, in the case of social services, 20% of the cost of FBA to municipalities and you want to enter into some sort of agreement about who's going to deliver that service, one of the issues you're going to have to deal with is the labour relations side of the issue.

This government says, "No, we don't trust municipal leaders and we don't trust trade unionists to negotiate with the provincial government a fair and equitable settlement about how that work is going to be performed and what the rules are going to be in the new collective agreement. We have no faith in working men and women and we have no faith in the municipal councils of this province. Therefore, I, Mike Harris, the Premier of Ontario, the soothsayer of the province of Ontario, will come down from the mount to the Legislature and introduce Bill 136 to be able to say, 'I will tell you, municipalities, and I will tell you, workers, what it is you shall do according to the rules of Mike Harris when it comes to how business will be done in this new Ontario that Mike Harris is trying to create.'"

That's what this particular bill is all about. They're saying they don't trust working men and women and they don't trust municipal councils.

On that note, I was quite fortunate: I participated at the AMO conference, like many other members of this assembly, over the last two and a half days at the Royal York Hotel. It was quite interesting what happened on Bill 136 during the day of resolutions, I believe on Tuesday. The municipal delegates of that convention are whom? They are the aldermen, they are the mayors, they are the councillors and the reeves of all the communities of Ontario, who went to this particular convention in order to deal with what this provincial government is doing. What did they say about Bill 136? They said, "We reject what the government is doing."

By a 60% majority vote on the floor of the AMO conference, the municipal leaders of this province said to the Mike Harris government: "Put the brakes on. We want to negotiate ourselves with our own municipal employees what the new deal will be. We understand that it's going to be difficult. We understand it's not going to be easy. We understand that we're going to take a lot of flak as municipal leaders. But, Mike Harris, do not start shoving down our throats what it is we have to do in doing your dirty work because of your offloading of the services on to us." So 60% of the delegates of the convention said, "We reject what Mike Harris is doing and we ask the government respectfully to withdraw Bill 136 and allow us, the municipal leaders, allow us, the people who have to negotiate with the public sector unions at the local level, to negotiate what the new deal will be in the restructuring."

What's the response of the government? They come in here and try to make us believe that the AMO delegates were happy with what the Mike Harris government is suggesting by way of Bill 136.

**2000**

They're quite an interesting lot. I sat at that AMO conference and listened to the minister, the Honourable Al Leach, come and say, "We believe as a provincial government that no social services costs should be transferred over to the municipal ratepayer and we're moving in that direction." He must be delusional. He is a member of a government which is transferring what to the municipalities? They're transferring social costs to the municipal taxpayers like we have never seen before. Social housing? Is that not a social service? Twenty percent of the FBA costs, what people like to call mother's allowance, will be transferred to municipalities — yet another social service cost. Land ambulances, the entire cost: Is that not a social service cost in regard to our health care system? They're delusional. They actually believe their own rhetoric, and they go around as if it's the gospel and expect everybody to believe what they're saying.

Madam Speaker, I was at that conference, as were you and others. I can tell you, through the three days I was there, many delegates, I would say the vast majority of delegates, at the AMO conference had great difficulty with what this government was doing, and not strictly on an ideological belief, but because they also understand that what this government is doing by way of downloading is going to mean a couple of things. The first is obvious: a reduction of services to the people of this province in everything from social housing to health care, especially on the long-term-care side, and also when it comes to a number of other services such as transit and others.

Community after community lined up and said, "This downloading exercise of the Mike Harris government is going to cost our local taxpayers" in the case of Dryden a 74% tax increase, "should the government move ahead with what it's proposing today." The community of Timmins, where I am from: a 40% tax increase to the municipal ratepayers. The community of Iroquois Falls, between the transferring of the OPP services and the transferring of all other municipal services, is looking at almost a 50% tax increase.

How does that relate to Bill 136? Because the Mike Harris government knows that once it starts doing that downloading exercise to the municipalities, the municipalities will have to scramble to either preserve those services or get rid of them entirely. I think it's going to be a combination of the two. That's my prediction. They're saying in the end that what has to happen is that the government of Ontario will dictate how bargaining is going to happen when it comes to restructuring the collective agreements.

What is even harder to take when it comes to Bill 136 is the definition of the word "fair" and how "fair" is used by this government when it comes to this particular piece of legislation. The Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, the Minister of Labour, a member with whom I've served in this House for seven years, for whom I have a certain amount of respect — I remember her being, in opposition, a respectful and very hardworking opposition member — comes into this House as a government member and says: "I have a new definition of fair. It will be fair when I take away people's bargaining rights. It will be fair when I take away the ability of workers to bring to judicial review a decision made by an arbitrator that he or she or a bargaining unit feels is unfair."

She is saying it is fair, along with Mike Harris, the Premier of this province, and all of these backbenchers. You can't hide. In the end you're Tories, and if you're with them you're going to have to go down with this one. You take away the employment equity rights of working women in this province to an extent we have never seen. Each government over the past 10 years, first with the Liberal government under the NDP-Liberal accord, then the Liberal government itself, and then the Bob Rae NDP government for five years, moved forward to try to address the issues of pay equity for working women in this province. We all recognized, all of us on all sides of the House, that when women go to work and do a job of equal value they should be paid the same wage as a male comparator.

We put in place pay equity to give finally some justice in the workplace to working women in this province. We moved at great length over the past 10 years to try to address the inadequacies that have been created over years by discrimination within the workplace in terms of how employers were paying women for doing work that was of equal value to men.

We haven't solved the whole problem. I don't pretend that for a second. There is still a long way to go, both in the public sector and especially in the private sector. But this government is doing what in Bill 136? They are taking away pay equity rights of working women in this province at a pace that we have never seen in the history of this province before. Compounded by the decisions that this government has made previously in budgets and previously in other pieces of legislation, working women are taking steps backwards. That should be shameful to this government, shameful.

I would think that in a modern society in the 1990s, even a Conservative government would be progressive enough — after all, that is in their party title, "Progressive" — to at least recognize that working women should be treated fairly. But no. This act says that they should not be. It says through the Minister of Labour, Elizabeth Witmer, along with the Premier and Dianne Cunningham, the minister responsible for women's issues, and all the Tory backbenchers and cabinet, that women should be treated unfairly.

It is very hard to take, and it takes an extreme amount of gall on the part of this government to stand in this Legislature, to go to an AMO conference or stand wherever in this province and try to pretend that Bill 136 is a fair piece of legislation, because it is not. It is everything but fair to the people of this province.

The other concern I have in regard to this bill as it relates to all other bills or almost all other bills that this government has done is what it means to the middle class of this province. Madam Speaker, you would have some sympathy for that because you come from the same class that I do, the middle class of Ontario.

Over a period of 50 years, in this province as across North America, but specifically this province, working men and women — and that is who? That is teachers, that is police officers, those are nurses, those are clerks, those are underground miners, those are lumberjacks, taxi drivers, you name it — have carved a place for themselves in this economy that we call the middle class, and it didn't happen by accident.

The middle class was created by, first of all, the efforts of working men and women to negotiate fair wages with their employers, sometimes public, sometimes private, but also by making sure that governments changed laws in order to help the middle class to establish itself and, once there, to sustain itself as an economic viability within our economy.

Those are the institutions such as health care, a publicly funded health care system. How else are we to remain as a middle class if we do not have a publicly funded system of health care that assures us, if we get sick, that we don't end up in the poorhouse? How else do we maintain ourselves as a middle class if we don't have a system of unemployment insurance and, yes, welfare, in the event that we lose our job, so that we can have some time to be able to secure ourselves financially somewhat, through either UI or social assistance, so that we can find time to find ourselves another job? Because in this economy, sometimes it is not easy. As a matter of fact, I was talking to a cab driver today from the Royal York who has been unemployed for two years as an architectural technologist, and this man has three or four years of college.

How else can you maintain a middle class if you don't have a government that makes sure the institutions that are necessary to support the middle class remain in place so that we, as an economic class within our society, are able to maintain ourselves within that economy?

What are they doing? This government, at every attempt, at every opportunity, is eliminating and trying to eliminate — and I don't think some of them really realize it — and diminishing the middle class of this province. They are eroding our public system of health care, one of the very tenets by which the middle class is able to survive. They are eroding our system of public education to where in the future, only those with the bucks in their pockets, with mom and dad who happen to work on Bay Street or be a personal friend of Mike Harris and the business community — not small business, Madam Speaker; big business — can send their children off to college or university.

**2010**

This government time and time and time again, as we see them in this Legislature, are undoing the very fabric by which the middle class is able to sustain itself in Ontario. Why? Because this government — and I don't think all the backbenchers of the government realize this, but certainly Tom Long and a whole bunch of other ideologues around Premier Harris — say there should be really two classes, those who got the money and those who don't, and those who don't be damned and those who do, more power to you. That's what this is all about. That's what Bill 136 is about, when you see a government strangle the working men and women of the public sector by way of this act.

When it comes to yet another tenet of our society that maintains the middle class, this government's got a failing grade. One of the things we need as a middle class to be able to survive is to have a strong and vibrant democracy by which the middle class is able to find some voice within this Legislature or within the House of Commons to make sure that their governments are, first of all, elected to represent them, and then, once there, are able to do things that are to the benefit of the middle class. Time and time again this government has shown by its actions that it does not respect the democratic institution to which they were elected. We have seen time and time again an erosion of our democracy, if not by changing the rules in this Legislature then by various acts this government has done that take away the rights of men and women in this province who are members of the middle class. As long as I am a New Democrat, as long as I am a member of this assembly, I will make sure this government gets a hell of a ride from me when it comes to them and their attack on the middle class.

C'est jamais avec plaisir qu'on regarde un gouvernement tel que le gouvernement de M. Harris pour les amener, comme on le dit, à l'avant de nous et les vexer jusqu'à un certain point quand ça en vient à leurs actions dans cette Assemblée.

Mais c'est terriblement important, et je pense que le public et même certains députés des arrière-bans du gouvernement conservateur se rendent compte vraiment de l'agenda de ce gouvernement. L'agenda de ce gouvernement est très simple : c'est pour diminuer la classe moyenne et c'est pour enlever les droits acquis que nous les Ontariens et les Ontariennes avons été capables d'aller rechercher au cours des dernières auprès 50 années de notre gouvernement provincial.

Ce gouvernement, à chaque reprise, à chaque fois qu'il en a eu l'opportunité, a fait quoi ? Ils ont tourné le dos à la classe moyenne et ils ont commencé à retirer les mécanismes dont nous avons besoin comme Ontariens et Ontariennes dans la classe moyenne pour être capables de nous soutenir.

A government which forgets who brought them here and turns its back on the very people who elected them the way these people have I predict will not live in this Legislature for a long time. Yes, they may be 32% or 34% in the polls, but we understand one thing in the province of Ontario, and we lived it as members of the New Democratic Party: It is a very volatile electorate. But this electorate is starting to make up its mind, and as I travelled around the province on committee this summer, as I went to the AMO convention this last week, I can tell you that the middle class of this province, this province we call home, Ontario, is not going to put up for very much longer with a Mike Harris government that turns its back on the middle class and says, "We stand four-square with the big business community and turn our backs to the working men and women of this province and the small business entrepreneurs who make up the middle class of this province." That, I say, is wrong, and this government should reconsider the actions that they are undertaking against the very people they are here to represent.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marion Boyd):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I'm pleased to rise and respond a little bit to the comments from the member from Cochrane South. I was happy that he spoke a little bit about Bill 136 so I'd have something to comment on.

Like him, I was also at the AMO conference, and it was interesting at the AMO conference last night to listen to the various members coming up and saying: "Please, please, please ignore the resolution. Bill 136 is absolutely essential if we are to restructure."

I would like to talk specifically about the restructuring that's going on in Chatham-Kent and the people from my municipality who approached me last night at AMO. In Chatham-Kent we're going from 23 municipalities down to one. We're going from 11 public utilities commissions down to one. We're going from five police departments down to one. We're doing all of that in the interests of the taxpayer so that taxes will be lower, so that we can attract more industry, create more jobs. There is only one taxpayer. We're doing that on his behalf.

It's interesting that the members of the municipality of Chatham, who are primarily responsible for making this process work, approached me last night in a panic and said: "Please, please ignore the resolution about Bill 136. We cannot restructure our municipality and reduce taxes for our members, for our constituents, and be fair to all the employees who work for us if we do not have the tools given to us by Bill 136. We've asked for them; you gave them to us. We need them. Please ignore the resolution." It would be interesting to see, if there were a new resolution put on the floor today, how the people from AMO would respond to that. My thinking is that we would get a different answer, that they would say: "Yes, Bill 136 is good legislation. We need it to restructure our province."

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have listened very attentively to the member for Cochrane South. As we heard earlier, he agrees with what the member for Fort William has said, and that is the same message: Slow down the process and reconsider Bill 136. I only wish that message would be heeded and heard across the way. Obviously it is not. At one time, in fact two days ago, I thought it might. Two days ago we opened the newspapers

in Toronto and we found that the Premier had said: "Yes, we hear you; we'll slow the process down. We know there's a fall in our numbers in terms of our popularity ratings and we know there's unhappiness across Ontario and that people want this process to be slowed down." He said, "I hear you." I was expecting some action. Today I see the opposite: a helter-skelter, quick-fix approach. The whole process is being speeded up instead of being slowed down.

I just want you to pay attention to one fact. When I look at the Pay Equity Act in Bill 136, I'm saying slow the process down. Did you consider all the sections? The member for Cochrane South indicated that in a number of issues and areas it's quite easy to see where fairness and openness and equity have not been produced.

I'm asking you also, along with the member for Cochrane South, to look at where it says, and I know the people of Ontario want to hear this: "People who provide private home day care in their own home are not employees for the purposes of the Pay Equity Act. That change is made retroactive to" — guess what date? — "January 1, 1988." Did you consider this? Is this fair?

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the remarks of my colleague the member for Cochrane South. I think the passion he brings to this debate is what's definitely lacking when we listen to the government stand up and read their canned speeches that, arguably, some of them haven't even read before they come into this place.

My colleague spoke of the AMO situation and what happened the other day and its importance in terms of the government's need to listen. I find it interesting to listen to the comments of the member for Chatham-Kent who now says, "No, no, don't listen to that resolution; don't listen to that vote; that shouldn't count." I'm prepared to live by that rule as long as you're prepared to apply it to June 1995.

I want to acknowledge, and I'll read later on in other two-minute responses, the resolution passed unanimously by Hamilton city council that condemned the Labour Relations Transition Commission and the Dispute Resolution Commission specifically, in addition to Bill 136 in its totality, and called on this government to pull back, to withdraw Bill 136. Why? Because they know the chaos it's going cause in our community. That's going to be replicated in community after community right across this province.

The government likes to say that the downloading issue doesn't tie into this; exactly the opposite. The city council of Hamilton last night was advised that $60 million is the shortfall after you net out the dollars you're offering to exchange. That's a $200-to-$300-a-month increase in property tax. Politically, you don't want to carry the freight for that, so Bill 136 lets every one of those dollars be paid on the backs of public sector working women and men. That's absolutely unacceptable.

**2020**

**Mr Maves:** I have to take exception right up front to the member for Cochrane South's claim that this government has no respect for collective bargaining. Right in the purpose clause of Bill 136 is, "To encourage the settlement of disputes through negotiation." What did the NDP government do in Ontario in 1993? What did the NDP government in Saskatchewan do in 1997? What did the NDP government in BC do in 1995? They have all chosen to implement legislation that determines collective bargaining outcomes, either through direct collective agreement overrides or by extending collective agreements. Most of the legislation these three governments brought in implemented measures such as contract extensions, wage rollbacks, wage ceilings and unpaid time off. Sounds familiar, I know.

The NDP in Ontario determined outcomes in 1993 and effectively suspended the right to strike and lockout for three years. The British Columbia NDP government and the Saskatchewan government, when restructuring health care, both appointed a commissioner to examine labour relations in the health sector. Following the commissioner's report, both provinces enacted regulations which determined new bargaining units and also determined which unions represent employees in each of the units. In both cases, the NDP government did not provide the parties with the process to negotiate their own solutions when determining new bargaining unit structures. Neither NDP government conducted representation votes or allowed the parties to achieve a negotiated solution.

In Ontario, we are encouraging negotiation solutions first. That's the purpose of the act: expeditious; same restructuring going on; encouraging negotiated solutions. You should be ashamed of the comments you made.

**Mr Bisson:** I am not ashamed of my words in this Legislature, as they are the truth. The member from Niagara talks about his government somehow having respect for working men and women and for the middle class in this province. This government, by its very actions under Bill 136, a bill that's supposed to deal with collective bargaining under Mike Harris's new Ontario, restructured Ontario, takes the word "fair" out of collective bargaining. How can that be a fair settlement for the working men and women of this province?

Other actions: Through Bill 7, the withdrawal of a whole bunch of rights that workers had gained over the past number of years; by changes to the Employment Standards Act; by changes they've done in regard to the worker health and safety agency, abandoning it; with Bill 39, Bill 99, and the list goes on, this government has indicated that they're anywhere but on the side of the middle class, and they're certainly on the side of big business.

The member for Chatham-Kent — it was interesting — said, "Delegates at AMO said: 'Don't listen to the 60% resolution on the part of the AMO conference that says to scrap Bill 136. We want you to use your dictatorial powers as you use them all the time and not respect the majority of the AMO delegates to the province of Ontario who by 60% rejected what your government is doing under Bill 136.'"

It speaks volumes about this government when members of this government can stand up, after I've taken the time to point out that they're taking away the rights of working women in this province by the elimination of pay equity — when the member Chatham-Kent gets up and speaks of only working men. What about the women? There are as many women in the workforce as there are men.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to point out that my good friend Leo is up in the galleries. I want to make sure that all members of the House welcome Leo into the Legislature. He's taking time out of his busy schedule to watch this particular debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I am pleased to have the opportunity tonight to share with my colleagues some of my thoughts on Bill 136. The first point that must be reinforced when speaking about this issue is that currently in Ontario we do not have a legislative framework in place to deal with the scale of amalgamations and restructuring that is occurring in the public sector; amalgamation that is long overdue; restructuring that strives to deliver more efficient, effective and affordable services to the people of Ontario. This is long overdue.

For far too long, the manner in which provincial and municipal governments have serviced the needs of Ontarians has not realistically identified the taxpayers' ability to pay. Governments recognize the need to consolidate service delivery. The focus of Bill 136 is to ensure that these changes take place in an environment that minimizes conflict between employers and employees and that services will not be interrupted during these transition periods. Public service cannot afford to be interrupted because of strikes and walkouts while employers and employees work out the terms of new collective agreements. The people of this province deserve better.

As a businessman for over 30 years, I have always taken the position that the best way to resolve work-related issues and problems is to have employers and employees sit down at the table and negotiate, talk out the issue and find a common solution. Each workplace has different issues that must be addressed. I believe that this approach is the only way to resolve any issue. Amalgamation represents one of these issues.

The ultimate goal of this bill is to set up a system that encourages employers and employees alike to negotiate their own first contract. The key word here is to "negotiate," not impose but to negotiate openly, honestly and fairly. I believe most municipal governments, schools and hospitals also take this position. They asked for this type of legislation. If this exercise is to be completed, both sides have to work together for the good of Ontarians.

How does this government propose to take us from point A to point B in a smooth and orderly manner? The vehicle is Bill 136. First, Bill 136 proposes the creation of a temporary Labour Relations Transition Commission to deal with more of the complex issues arising out of amalgamation. Some groups and organizations are claiming that the commission will take away the democratic rights of workers when unions begin to merge.

Contrary to tonight's rhetoric, this is not the case. If a union does not represent a substantial majority of employees, either 75% or 60% depending on the number of unions merging, or disputes between unions arise as to who should represent the collective, the commission will conduct a vote, a democratic vote to allow employees to choose the bargaining agent for the new unit. Is this wrong? I don't think so. Let it also be stated that if 40% or more employees in the new bargaining unit are non-union, the option of not being unionized will appear on the ballot, a principle that is consistent with the Labour Relations Act.

How can anyone honestly and comfortably say that marking a ballot is undemocratic and violates the rights of workers? How can anyone honestly say that we are taking away the democratic right of workers, when the workers will have the right to determine who will represent their interests — not the commission, not the government, but the workers? Is this not democracy?

Members of the opposition parties, usually from the third party, claim that Bill 136 is an assault on collective bargaining, an assault on the fundamental values of labour relations. That statement is wrong and it is most hypocritical, coming from the party that passed Bill 48, called the social contract, in 1993 as part of its effort to control costs in the wake of two disastrous budgets.

If any piece of legislation introduced in this House ever violated the most fundamental principles of collective bargaining, it was Bill 48. This legislation allowed the government to override existing collective agreements. Where parties were unable to find necessary cost savings, the act imposed a 5% wage rollback and up to 12 unpaid days. Now our opponents will say, "But the workers could still strike." The right to strike became irrelevant because the employer had no authority to negotiate terms inconsistent with those under the act. Bill 48 did nothing except impose outcomes on workers.

**2030**

Let me say to my honourable colleagues in the third party: That is your record on labour relations. That is your record, not ours. With the exception of a few courageous members of your caucus, your government clearly violated the rights of workers that you claim today to stand up for.

Bill 136 sets the stage for negotiated collective agreements. Labour has always told government not to intervene directly in collective agreement outcomes by removing successor rights and overriding collective agreement restrictions on contracting out. This bill does not predetermine outcomes, nor does it remove successor rights. Rather, it encourages workplace parties to resolve issues through collective bargaining.

The second highlight of the legislation creates a Dispute Resolution Commission, a panel created to promote negotiated settlements and resolve disputes should negotiations fail. The Dispute Resolution Commission will also have the ability to administer a binding dispute or resolu-

tion during first-contract negotiations. Let us be clear on this issue: This power of the Dispute Resolution Commission is a temporary one and can only be used at the request of either party and only on the first negotiated contract after amalgamation.

Some individuals are also claiming that employers will simply avoid bargaining and ask the Dispute Resolution Commission to impose a contract. Bill 136 adopts the provisions of the Ontario Labour Relations Act that require both parties to bargain in good faith and make a serious effort to reach a negotiated settlement. Both parties will be required to go through the normal conciliation process before applying to the commission. If either party prematurely applies to the Dispute Resolution Commission, the chief commissioner has the power to order the parties back to the bargaining table. Once the DRC is appointed to resolve the disputes, the emphasis will be on negotiating their own solutions. Mediation is a fundamental component of this process. Only after these efforts are fruitless will the DRC make an order to resolve the dispute.

I do not believe the DRC will look favourably upon either the employer or the employee triggering the DRC mechanism before meaningful negotiations have been exhausted. If workers are prepared to negotiate openly and honestly with employers, then employers must be prepared to do the same. Bargaining settlements have been, and still remain, the best way to deal with issues.

This issue is not about negotiating one individual contract with one individual union in one individual company in Ontario. Rather, this is about every hospital, school and municipality in Ontario restructuring all of their public services at virtually the same time: a truly monumental task, a task that requires a legal framework by which services to the public are guaranteed without the fear of strikes and walkouts. Employers must restructure their organizations in an efficient and organized manner, and employees will be treated fairly.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Member for Durham East.

**Mr Gravelle:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I believe it should go to the Liberal caucus first.

**The Acting Speaker:** I beg your pardon. On this occasion, it should. Member for Cornwall.

**Mr Cleary:** I'm pleased to comment on the member's speech. As he knows and I know, we met with the wardens and Liberal caucus and government caucus in Kingston a few weeks ago and there were many questions asked there. Many of the wardens had a lot of questions. They presented us each with briefs. I didn't hear too many answers come out of those meetings, although there were several government members there.

The big issue is the downloading that this government is bringing on the municipalities. Provincial highways, big downfall; they're unloading the highways and probably only a third or a little bit more percentage of the money to go with upgrading those highways. They've even forgotten about the winter maintenance and the upkeep afterwards. I know that's a big issue all across Ontario, along with the shortfall to the municipalities.

As I mentioned earlier tonight, in my particular area in SD&G there's a shortfall of some $36 million between the city and the counties. In an area where there's high unemployment, I don't know where the municipalities are going to raise that money. I know municipal councils have pared back on employees and cut services and now they're looking at a big increase in taxes to keep what services they have left.

Please take the opportunity to consult with the municipal employees. I think dialogue is what we need here and I think everyone wants to work together.

**Mr Christopherson:** In responding to the comments of the member for Peterborough, let me say that he spent a fair bit of time talking about democracy. He must have mentioned the word at least three or four times. Democracy also means listening and giving people their say and letting them express legitimate democratic opposition. You don't believe in that as a government, and you as a specific member certainly don't.

It was only a couple of weeks ago in Burlington when we were on hearings of Bill 99 — your attack on injured workers where you're gutting the WCB and going after the most vulnerable people in our society, taking $15 billion out of the pockets of injured workers, giving $6 billion of it back to your corporate pals — where at that particular hearing I put a motion on the floor requesting unanimous consent to extend the hearings beyond the six measly days that this government had allocated. Every one of the government members sat there and did not oppose that request. When I turned to the Chair and said, "I seem to have unanimous consent to place this motion," that would allow injured workers to be heard in Mike Harris's undemocratic Ontario, this was the member who stepped forward and on the record said, "No, I oppose."

*Applause.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Look at you applaud. That's disgusting. You're all disgusting. You use the word "hypocrisy." What kind of hypocrisy is it to say that you believe in democracy and yet deny people the right to be heard? That's what you're all about. That's why you've changed the rules. The speakers now don't even get the full half-hour. Now they're down to 10 minutes: 10 minutes to talk about a bill that's going to drop the quality of life of the people who work in this province, and you don't give a damn. You've got a lot of nerve standing up and talking about democracy. You don't know the first damn thing about democracy.

**2040**

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'll try to speak a little more quietly and perhaps a little more effectively.

Bill 136, the Public Sector Transition Stability Act, I believe is indeed that, trying to provide an environment for stability in the public sector for the people of Ontario.

The member for Peterborough, whom I have the greatest respect for, has clearly demonstrated that issues like the right to strike and successor rights are not negotiable. This government wants to provide a framework where we

can move from where we are to where we need to be. I want the members today to recognize that our minister, Elizabeth Witmer, has clearly and very effectively asked for input. She's asked for input from the Legislature and from the participants throughout Ontario.

With over 3,300 collective agreements at stake in the public sector, it's clear that when we move on restructuring Ontario — and most people here agree that we need to restructure; business as usual is not on — we must have stability. We have to provide essential services, police, fire and hospitals, for the people of Ontario.

I wanted to make a couple of points. In the restructuring, it's clearly understood there are many sectors that presently don't have the right to strike. What we're trying to provide is a dispute resolution process by which the parties are clearly mandated and empowered to try and resolve their differences without the arbitration process. That's encouraged.

The arbitration process – I wouldn't want to dispute with the member for Hamilton Centre. The arbitrators are professionals, and to think that they could be compromised by this government or any government, I think more highly of professional arbitrators.

I want to also recognize that the member for Peterborough has said there will be no transgression of successor rights. That's clear, that's in the bill, and there's no unilateral removal of bargaining rights.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** C'est un plaisir pour moi de vous présenter mes commentaires sur les points qui ont été soulevés par le député de Peterborough. Je m'oppose au projet de loi, c'est simple. C'est que le gouvernement a démontré que nous avons un manque de respect. Nous croyons que nous devons avoir la démocratie pour les citoyens et les citoyennes de cette province.

Je crois que nous avons omis de consulter les travailleurs. Nous avons omis de consulter les employés municipaux, les employés des services de santé, les employés du ministère de l'Éducation. Nous n'avons qu'à nous rappeler l'automne dernier lorsque le gouvernement a dit aux municipalités : «On doit procéder avec l'amalgamation. Si vous ne procédez pas avec les amalgamations, nous allons couper vos octrois.» Qu'est-il arrivé ? Nous avons décidé de couper les octrois. Amalgamation ou non, nous avons coupé les octrois.

Le 4 septembre, nous allons avoir trois élections partielles. Les gens de Tecumseh, d'ici-même à Toronto, et d'Ottawa-Ouest ne sont pas au courant encore que nous aurions dû peut-être discuter des deux projets de loi, le projet de loi 152 et le projet de loi 136, le transfert aux municipalités. Dans ce projet de loi, on va donner l'autorisation au gouvernement de démontrer aux municipalités que le gouvernement est maître, et nous allons oublier de consulter les municipalités. Nous allons établir des directives et les gouvernements municipaux n'auront pas d'autre choix. Mais Tecumseh seule aura une facture d'au-delà de 480 000 $ pour le transfert de responsabilité des ambulances. Est-ce que ces gens le savaient là-bas ? Absolument pas.

**Mr Stewart:** I'd just like to clarify something from the member for Hamilton Centre. Yes, I voted against extending the hearings, because what had happened — you talk about democracy. We were hearing the same reports, the same statements from the same people, and the people we should have been hearing were not able to get on the agenda. The disabled were who we wanted to hear, and all we heard was the same groups day after day with no recommendation, and the gentleman who put on the resolution did nothing else but grandstand for two weeks instead of listening to the people we were there for.

As far as this bill goes, I have faith in the municipal politician. The municipal politician will go back to his municipality, he will restructure, he will amalgamate, he will negotiate in good faith, and that's what it's all about. Employee-employer relations seem to have gone out the window in your mind. I don't believe it has. I have been an employer. I know of many employees all over this province, all over this country, that have negotiated in good faith and have great relationships with them. Why are we turning everybody against each other? I don't believe this will happen.

**Mr Wildman:** Why are you doing that?

**Mr Stewart:** You are doing it again. You did it under the social contract and you want to put us in the same bloody position that you guys were in. You created a problem with the social contract. Now you're saying we're doing it. And the opposition over there, they don't believe in a balanced budget. They don't want nothing. Well, some days they do; other days they don't. It's a little bit hard to really know where they're coming from.

I believe that 136 will work.

**Mr Gravelle:** I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak on Bill 136. If I may, I would like to begin by responding actually to the member for Peterborough. The member for Peterborough –

**Mr Christopherson:** Another one-term wonder.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, the member for Port Arthur has the floor.

**Mr Gravelle:** The member for Peterborough has insulted everyone who made a presentation at the Bill 99 hearings, absolutely insulted everyone. Our critic was there, the critic for the NDP was there every day, and the fact is that the member for Peterborough knows full well that there were hundreds of recommendations put forward from every group possible, and the only problem was there wasn't enough time available to get all the recommendations in there.

I know our caucus or our critic has 76 amendments being put forward. To me, unfortunately, this is very indicative of what's happening across this province with this government. This government is getting very much out of touch, out of touch to the point that they do not mind insulting the workers of this province. They don't mind insulting anybody any more, and that is really part of the problem that's happening.

Bill 136 is certainly a part of that that we're seeing, a bill that clearly does attack workers, a bill that really is something that for absolutely – I think a form of despair is

developing as a result of all the bullying action of this government that have gone on for the last two years, because Bill 136 is really just the next in a long line, a long succession, of bills and actions by this government that are hurting people. I truly believe that people are beginning to lose hope, whether you're talking about our seniors who have been under attack in a variety of manners in terms of user fees being put on them and attached to everything that happens to them or in terms of our young people who are having all kinds of tuition fees increased by 10%. We just found out, for example, that those people who are applying for student loans now must have their vehicles assessed as part of their income, which is taking a lot of them out of their bracket. Action upon action is hurting desperately the people of this province that we're supposed to help, and this government doesn't seem to really care.

Something else that needs to be noted, I think, is that the rule changes have certainly kicked in in the Ontario Legislature. We have now reached seven hours of debate. Each of us now only has 10 minutes to make our point, to argue the issues that we feel are so important. It truly is extraordinarily tragic that 10 minutes is all that's left to speak on a bill as important as this which is going to affect so many, many people.

Because I have much less time than I planned and I hoped to have, I would like to, quite frankly, read a letter from a constituent that I think sums up very well the concerns that are expressed about Bill 136. The constituent is Mr Burns from Thunder Bay, and he writes:

"I am deeply concerned over the proposed changes suggested in Bill 136 as it applies to the collective bargaining rights for civil servants.

"These changes will take an already strained civil service beyond what could reasonably be expected and sow the seeds for what will surely be a diminished level of service, beyond what has already occurred through cutbacks.

"To suspend the bargaining rights for emergency service workers, who do not have the right to strike as it is, is a recipe for disaster. The public of Ontario count on these people in the most trying of times. Countless hours donated by these people, without pay, has been driven by pride and dedication." This is someone who obviously cares about the public service in this province. "This bill will undermine all of that and return a solid relationship between these associations and the government to the era of the 1800s.

"Mike Harris and the policies of his government would set a shining example for the robber barons of the last century. The message is Ontario is open for business, at the cost of your family's welfare and safety.

**2050**

"This is a government who removes billions from the pension plans of its employees for a pittance in return and is now going to crush them with draconian labour restrictions to meet unrealistic election promises. Any promised tax cut will not come without its price. That price may well be the public's security and support for the provincial Conservative Party." Signed by "One of many former Conservatives."

I think Mr Burns has expressed very well the feelings of a number of people and I am pleased to have the opportunity to read his remarks into the record and to speak also on behalf of the number of associations, the number of groups in terms of our workers across this province who, I think, need an advocate at this time.

The fact is, it's not the municipalities who are the problem in terms of the collective bargaining process. They want to maintain it. We know what happened at AMO despite what has been said across the floor several times tonight and in previous debates. The fact is that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario did pass a resolution two days ago at their annual meeting asking this government to withdraw this bill. The reason they wanted the government to withdraw this bill was very, very simple. It was because they recognized the chaos it would incur and they feel they can handle the situation themselves. They don't want to be put in that position.

Municipal governments are already facing some extraordinary problems and extraordinary problems that they also are battling with the government over. Some of the downloading realities are truly, truly wrong — that's probably the most simple way of putting it — if you look at some of the decisions being made by this government which Al Leach, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, has described as "a package," a package that can't be touched. As a result, you have public health: public health which I think even the Minister of Health, who I see is here tonight, must recognize truly should remain a provincial responsibility. We know that public health —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gravelle:** How about the funding for the genetic counselling program, Mr Minister?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** We'll look after that.

**Mr Gravelle:** The minister said he will look after it. You'll be funding it 100%?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gravelle:** That's good news, if you can confirm that for us, Mr Health Minister.

We look at the situation that's being faced in terms of the extra policing costs. I know that in my riding in Port Arthur this past summer, for example, Shuniah township, July 2, torrential rainstorm, a natural disaster occurred, flooding which truly damaged large parts of the community. I've been trying since that time to get some assistance from the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but it has not yet been forthcoming. At the same time, very shortly after that we heard about the downloading costs that are coming in terms of the OPP costs for policing in Shuniah township, well over $800,000 a year being added on.

Municipalities are absolutely under attack and it's very, very important that this government realize that they cannot simply keep forcing the issue and ultimately attacking the property taxpayers because when you look at the attacks they've made on our seniors, the attacks that they made on our youth, the attacks that they're making on

our workers in every sense, when you look at the attacks they're making on our workers, it goes right back to the very beginning of this mandate.

It's very, very clear. No matter what the members of the government will say, when one looks at 136 and sees exactly how this bill works, it's very clear, it's a stacked deck. It's a setup. The fact is that there's not a chance at all that with the Dispute Resolution Commission in place and when you have it, as the member for Fort William was very clear to point out, being based on the ability to pay, there is going to be any opportunity for workers to be able to truly advance themselves.

You know, we need to advocate on behalf of the middle class, the lower class and everybody who is truly under attack because the fact is, people are losing hope. We look at those people who are the most vulnerable. We look at a government that, as its first action before we even sat in this Legislature, cut the amount of money available to people on social assistance by 21.6%. It was the first action they took. It was done by a regulation, a rule, and we've now seen that this has had a devastating effect on those people most in need. We've seen the cuts to children's aid societies. We've seen continual attacks on those who can least manage it and we've seen a government that continues to drift further and further away from being in touch with the realities that are out there.

The Premier can certainly come back and talk about the warm reception he received at the AMO meeting all he wants. We know that's not the case. The member for Chatham-Kent can certainly talk about what he was being told by his municipality. The fact is that the municipalities do not want this bill to go forward. They've made that very, very clear. The fact is that the people of this province do not want this bill to go forward. The fact is that ultimately it is going to cause a level of chaos and a level of contentiousness that is simply going to bring us to a state where things will not be manageable at all.

We have to recognize that the people need to be listened to, and whether or not the member for Peterborough agrees, we should be having more public hearings, the fact is that we must have public hearings. We need to have the opportunity to let people out there express their feelings. But there's really no point in having these public hearings unless the government is willing to listen, and it's becoming more and more apparent each time we go out there that the government has absolutely no intention of listening to the concerns of the people and listening to the recommendations that come forward as a result of these public hearings.

I simply close, as my time is up, by asking the government once again to withdraw Bill 136. It will be the right thing to do.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Wildman:** I intervene in the debate to congratulate my friend for Port Arthur on his presentation. I agree with him completely that this government seems to be selectively hard of hearing. They say they are prepared to listen, but then when the municipality representatives in convention clearly vote and say —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** It has been said in this House that we shouldn't count that vote, that 60% of the delegates asked for the government to reconsider, said that this bill was going to cause problems in terms of relationships in collective bargaining and that they wanted this government to rethink and they wanted dialogue before this moved forward, for the government to pull back.

What do we hear from the people who say that they are doing this for the municipalities? They say: "Oh, well, you shouldn't pay attention to what they voted. It doesn't matter. They didn't really mean it because if they really meant it, they would have agreed with us." It's kind of, as I said, selectively hard of hearing. When someone gives this government a clear message that they want the government to be more thoughtful, to rethink the situation, to consult with them, to have dialogue to determine if there's another better way to do things, they say: "Wait a minute. No, they don't agree with what we're doing, therefore they mustn't have said that. They didn't really mean it and it doesn't count."

Then the new president of AMO says, "We did ask for some tools," and they say, "Okay, that must be what we should pay attention to." The point is, there are a lot of delegates who expressed the views of their municipalities and this government should be listening to them.

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** I want to comment on one of the themes that has come through in a number of speakers here this evening, and that is the question of listening and the question then of what exactly is the role between the government and its municipal partners. I want to just comment on the fact that it is possible those municipalities who can and wish to and are able to negotiate an agreement obviously are able to continue to do so. Bill1 136 does not interfere with that opportunity to negotiate.

I'd also like to comment on those who have concerns about the whole issue of listening. That becomes very clear when you look at some of the history of this bill where employers wanted to look at the questions of successor rights and contracting-out privileges. When labour's concerns were addressed in this legislation to make sure that their concerns were maintained and that there was protection, seniority rights are there, successor rights are there.

The minister continues to listen. The minister has made very clear a willingness to meet with AMO, with the police associations, with the labour leaders of this province. I think it's important to maintain that opportunity for open dialogue and listening. Both the minister and the Premier have made it very clear that that is their goal.

**2100**

**Mr Patten:** I'd like to extend congratulations to my colleague from Port Arthur and sympathize with him that he didn't have the time he felt he needed to give credit to addressing this bill. He began by saying that many people are being insulted by this. It's an in-your-face bill. He used the term that the bill is a stacked deck. The more

people see of this, the more they begin to see that indeed it is.

The member for Durham-York talks about listening. The police association was quite upset. This was tried before, in the final days of Frank Miller. You remember the dispute with the Metropolitan police when they attempted to impose something. They ended up doing what? They ended up assigning an independent, agreed-upon arbitrator, because that was the only way that you could resolve the dispute.

If you think the police or the firefighters will not go to the wall on this one — believe me, that's all it is, because they have nothing left. There's nothing left for them. You've taken away the single tool the essential workers had, which will become permanent, by the way; that's not temporary with the essential workers. The single tool they had was a mutuality of agreement on an independent arbitrator, whom they both respected, to help resolve it if negotiations led to that particular point.

They will not be able to do that now. All it takes is any single party to call jeopardy and say, "We can't arrive at an agreement and therefore we will ask the Dispute Resolution Commission to resolve this for us." With the autocratic powers the DRC has in looking at ability to pay — and of course nobody has the ability to pay — in looking at programs or replacements for no increases in taxes etc, you can believe that some employers will utilize that opportunity.

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm pleased to compliment the member for Port Arthur. I point out to all those who are watching that the member, as he indicated at the beginning, had 10 minutes, that's it. Last week he'd have had at least 30 minutes to speak. Today he got 10 minutes to speak on behalf of the people in his community on a bill, a brand-new piece of legislation, that will directly affect hundreds of thousands of people in virtually every single municipality in this province. If that is not a total disregard for the concerns of the people, I don't know what is. It's certainly not wanting to listen. It's all about shutting down discussion.

The first comment that the member for Port Arthur made when he rose in his place was to condemn the comments of the member for Peterborough for the insult and the disrespect he showed for all the people who made presentations, all the injured workers who were there, and certainly for the literally thousands of people who wanted and deserved an opportunity to speak but were denied because this government doesn't like to face opposition. We couldn't go into Peterborough. We wanted to. We couldn't go to Peterborough because you wouldn't let the committee attend enough cities to let people be heard.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** You chose 66% of the delegates.

**The Acting Speaker:** You're not in your seat, member for Brampton North.

**Mr Christopherson:** If anybody doubts how they really feel, just watch a rerun of the tape and look at the look of contempt on his face as he talked about the presenters.

If you really cared about listening, given the fact that AMO voted the way it did, whether you like it or not — and the OFL has taken exactly the same position — you should be pulling this bill back and beginning dialogue with all the parties involved. But you're not listening and therefore you're not doing that.

**Mr Gravelle:** I certainly want to thank all the members who responded: the members for Algoma, Durham-York, Ottawa Centre and Hamilton Centre. It's difficult to know what to focus on in the time remaining, other than to respond to the member for Durham-York.

You talked about consultation. The problem we continually face here is that we have a government that says, "Here's what we're going to do and we'll consult later." That's a problem, because the government tends not to change things. The bill goes forward; they then say, "We want to consult." We've seen the consultation process and how it doesn't work.

You say this bill does not interfere with the power to negotiate. Well, I think it's a problem, because we've seen the problem with a number of groups that were not able to negotiate with this government, because it makes up its mind and sticks to it.

The fact is, there needs to be a greater understanding on your part. There seems to be a general understanding needed by the government that people who come forward to make presentations, the public, should be accorded some respect and their point of view taken seriously. That certainly doesn't seem to be what happens, when we saw the reaction we had in the House tonight.

I can only finish my remarks by making a plea to this government to recognize that ultimately they are not showing respect for people for whom they should show respect. A lot of the people out there actually supported this government in the election of 1995. Many of them certainly regret it. I read a letter from a constituent who clearly was one of those supporters. He's pretty upset, as are a lot of other people, because they recognize that this government is truly rushing things through in a manner that is frightening a lot of people in this province, that is not leading us to economic prosperity but is leading us to a form of chaos. That is absolutely frightening to a large proportion of this population.

The government members would do well to sit back and recognize that they may be getting out of touch. They would do well to listen to the people of the province and withdraw this bill now.

**The Acting Speaker:** Before we go on with debate, I would ask those who are not in their own seats to please resume their own seats or to take their conversations outside the chamber. It is becoming very hard to hear. As we all know, this is the end of a long day. It's important for us to give the floor to those who have the floor and to be respectful of this process. I really ask members to try and keep order in the House in the last half-hour that we're meeting today. Thank you.

Further debate? The member for Nickel Belt.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. A timely intervention on your part, much appreciated.

I've been somewhat bemused by some of the arguments that have come from government members about the whole issue of listening. The member for Chatham-Kent really brought it home to me — a fine gentleman, I must say, but when he made his arguments about listening to people, I wasn't sure we were in the same universe. He talked about going to AMO and having a few, I presume, of the 40% who voted against the resolution saying, "Don't pay any attention to the resolution," and therefore that's what the government should do.

If I were a constituent in Chatham-Kent, I would feel that I had been defrauded. I don't want to use language too strong, but I think the people in Chatham-Kent didn't understand that the member for Chatham-Kent, when he ran for office, didn't use his real name. His real name, with that kind of logic, has to be Lewis Carroll. It simply has to be. That's not Jack Carroll sitting over there. That really is Alice in Wonderland logic. As I say, the people in Chatham-Kent will not be happy with that.

There's been a lot of talk tonight about not just the listening aspect in the exercise we're engaged in here, but some really brutal shots at the NDP government for bringing in what's become popularly known as the social contract. As someone whose name was attached to that piece of legislation, I've been sitting here smarting a bit at some of the comments. I would simply remind the members who imply that this was an anti-labour act on our part that it was done, plain and simple, for two reasons: one, to bring $2 billion in savings towards deficit reduction, and we achieved it.

**2110**

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** You didn't achieve it.

**Mr Laughren:** You don't know what you're talking about, Chris. We achieved the $2 billion on the social contract. Second, and probably just as important, it was to save jobs for public sector workers in the province, and it did save jobs for public sector workers.

I have not even an ounce of guilt in my entire system about the social contract, because it accomplished what it was supposed to do: save about 20,000 to 30,000 jobs for public sector workers in the province. I think that was an admirable goal and an admirable accomplishment.

The fact that you people can sit there and tell us that we're not pro-labour because we did that — you came to power and cancelled the anti-scab legislation. The lowest form of humanity is a scab who crosses the picket line, and you cancelled that. You did real damage to pay equity, and in this very bill you cancel a wage protection plan. How nasty and narrow-minded and mean-spirited can you be? That program for workers cost roughly $25 million a year for workers, the workers who had already done the labour, already performed the work in keeping with their belief in the work ethic, the Protestant work ethic that you people are always worshipping. If they did that and the company left town or went bankrupt, there was a form of protection there. It wasn't a lot, it wasn't enough, but it was some protection, and you people have cancelled that.

Worse still, you don't have the courage to stand in your place and say, "No, we don't think workers should have that protection." You say, "We're cancelling it because we think the federal government should bring in legislation," knowing full well that the federal Liberals will never in a hundred years bring in legislation to protect working people. You know that. That's why it's so hypocritical to use the argument you do. You know full well that it's not going to happen. There is no indication from the Minister of Labour or anyone else that that legislation is going to change at the federal level. You know it and I know it. That will never, ever happen. When it comes to protecting workers, we don't need any lectures from this anti-labour group that sits across the floor from us, no lectures at all.

I don't know what the reaction of the labour movement will be when this bill passes, which it certainly will. There could be others in this chamber who have a better idea as to what the reaction of the labour movement will be.

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** He is up there.

**Mr Laughren:** I wasn't looking for anybody in particular. I don't know what the reaction of the labour movement will be, but I will be very surprised and quite frankly disappointed if the reaction of the labour movement isn't white-hot anger at what you're doing to them and their members. I'll be very disappointed, because you are asking for it, whether it's what you're doing to workers' compensation, what you're doing to allow scabs. Deep in your heart of hearts you're encouraging scabs, not just making their existence legal.

I must say that you deserve every ounce of labour disruption that occurs in this province. I don't know how much there will be — maybe there will be none — but I sure hope I don't hear any expressions of surprise or dismay from across the floor if it does happen. You have no right to do that, absolutely no right whatsoever, because you're doing everything to provoke labour disruption in this province. If you don't know that — maybe that's your goal. I don't know. I don't want to attribute motive. Maybe that's your goal. Maybe you need more enemies. Maybe you have alienated so many of your friends you now need to take on a battle with your enemies. Maybe that's what's driving you. I don't know that. But I want to tell you we're heading for some interesting times in this province.

We haven't even seen the legislation dealing with teachers yet. What are you going to do with teachers? Are you going to take on the teachers and provoke disruption in our schools? Completely unnecessary provocation, but that's what you're doing. That $5 billion a year in a tax cut is what is driving you, and you're absolutely determined that you're going to deliver that no matter what.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** What about the social contract? What was that about?

**Mr Laughren:** Maybe the member for Grey-Owen Sound wasn't here at the beginning of my remarks when I

dealt with that very issue. If you were here, you weren't listening, because I dealt with that issue already.

I don't want to be accused of not dealing with the specifics of this bill. I support what 60% of the delegates to the AMO convention said, and that's that this bill should be withdrawn. I agree with the Ontario Federation of Labour, which say this bill should be withdrawn. I want to see a list of people who say that this bill should go through. Oh, of course. It's the Tory caucus. I forgot. It's the herd called the Tory caucus

I want to close by saying that we are going back in time to an era when governments, particularly Tory governments, looked for fights with people they thought might not be popular with the public at large. That seems to be what's happening here. I suspect they're going to get their wish. If that's your wish, that's what you're going to get, because you are sure picking your enemies in a very strange way.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Laughren:** I have trouble speaking when there is no noise around.

I hope the members opposite will take the time to respond to some of my remarks because I'd like to have some of my instincts proven wrong about what's motivating this gang of bandits. I'm not sure they can do that, but I hope they'll try.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm more than pleased to rise to help the honourable member on that path to enlightenment. In most of the ridings of Ontario, the voters did reach that judgement on June 8, 1995, and proved your methodology wrong.

But the member brought up the issue of the social contract and suggested that should be taken as some kind of positive contrast to the consultation our government is doing. To those who may not have been tuned in to the parliamentary channel about five years ago now, I remind you that there were no public hearings on the social contract. It was pushed through a committee of the whole House in two days. In total, from the first day they even brought up the concept to the day they passed the bill, it took three weeks, three weeks to trample on the rights of every single public sector employee in this province. You're suggesting that that should be taken as a positive contrast? I think we can see why the voters, including a majority, I suspect, of public service employees, voted against your government and in favour of ours in June 1995.

I'd like to also say that the member accused us of picking our enemies. I would suggest, sir, that you made a few enemies yourself. You decided that business was bad and you decided that every taxpayer in this province was your enemy as well. There's no other explanation for why you would have run up a $100 billion in debt at the rate of $11 billion a year. I suggest that is not exactly being friendly to the overworked, overtaxed citizenry in this province.

This bill and all other bills that have gone before us so far have been exposed to far more public consultation than they would have the viewing public believe: 720 hours of public hearings last year, and over and above that, untold hours of consultation by this ministers. This bill is an important addition to the labour negotiation tools available to municipalities.

**Mr Bisson:** Madam Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to allow the member for Scarborough Centre to speak for yet another two minutes. I can see the Tory polling numbers going down every minute he speaks, and I'd like to give him that opportunity.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilchrist:** Madam Speaker, I don't know if we can convince the member for Nickel Belt, but clearly the member for Cochrane South —

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, member for Scarborough East, I did not hear unanimous consent. Is it agreed? No. All right.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Members, we have a little over 10 minutes to remain. Please let us continue with the debate. Member for Ottawa Centre, comments and questions.

**2120**

**Mr Patten:** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Nickel Belt. I won't deal with the Alice in Wonderland scenario he introduced, but I think he did raise a question suggesting that what was revealing about this legislation was the values, and he addressed the intentions of this government related to the wage protection section.

I'd like to make a few comments on that particular section. That wage protection program helped almost 90,000 people over the course of 1991 to 1997, people who had worked, had earned their wages, had earned their vacation pay or whatever it was and now had a chance, through bankruptcies or whatever would happen to a company, to be considered first in line. I think that's only just. And I think it is revealing because the only link between this particular wage protection program and the collective bargaining process that this government wants to change is money. It has nothing to do with collective bargaining. The wage protection program stands on its own. But it's a way for the government to get more money on the backs of people who live paycheque to paycheque very often.

Look inside when you listen and you see some of the people who are in those positions and what happens to them. They have to go out at 45 or 50 years of age to try and find another job, and a bank or a great big company, an insurance company or whatever the hell it is, goes before those particular workers who have already earned their wages and given of themselves to that particular company in good faith. You suggest that they're at the bottom of the creditors' list. I say shame on you. It shows your values, that you don't care about these workers.

**Mr Christopherson:** I always find it a special treat to be able to listen to the dean of this House, a member who has been here for 26 years, fighting for the people of his riding, the people he cares about, and making sure that with every pronouncement he makes it's improving the lot

of working people, unlike this government which does exactly the opposite. This bill is just another indication of that.

I think it's actually lucky for us that you have decided to follow this ridiculous course, because it's so ridiculous that no one's going to buy into it; that somehow the government of Mike Harris is a bigger friend of working, middle-class families than Bob Rae was and that the labour movement ought to be thankful Mike Harris is there. I'll tell you, any day you want to try to defend that suggestion, we'll gladly take you on. Any day you want to compare your litany of attack on the rights of working people in this province to the measures that we took and the positive improvements we made to working people and their lives, we'll gladly take you on.

Let's take a look at 136. Just in 136 alone you are once again going after women. It's like you have a vendetta against women, because pay equity relates almost entirely to women and you're gutting it. The employee wage protection plan has already been described by others as a positive piece of protection for working people, and you're taking it away. What are some of the other things on the list? Well, you killed the Workplace Health and Safety Agency. You have taken rights away in the Employment Standards Act. Even non-union people, you have gone after their rights. You took away the successor rights for OPSEU without a minute of public hearings in Bill 7 and caused that terrible strike; the injured workers in Bill 99; you've gone after the police and firefighters —

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Further comments and questions? Member for Chatham-Kent.

**Mr Carroll:** You could also refer to me as the member from Wonderland, Madam Speaker, if you like.

In response to the member from Nickel Belt, he had a lot of rhetoric about the vote at AMO. I'd like to put it in a little bit of perspective. There were roughly 1,400 delegates at AMO. They represented roughly 800 municipalities in the province. According to an article in the Globe and Mail, 198 people voted to request the government to withdraw Bill 136 pending further consultation. I don't know, but to me, 198 out of 1,400 doesn't represent a tremendous mandate. I just thought I would like to put that particular number in perspective so that you could understand a little bit about where the numbers came from.

The other thing I'd like to comment on is, the member from Nickel Belt said we would go down in history as the most anti-union government ever. I'm not so sure that his government and his party don't already have a lock on that.

I'd like to quote from Sid Ryan from April 28, 1993, — this is the same Sid Ryan who stood up there in the front row of the gallery and embarrassed himself and the trade union movement about a week ago — re the social contract: "We're going to put pressure on this government like they've never seen in their lives. The social contract is an insult to trade unionists and an insult to collective bargaining." I don't know; it sounds to me like the New Democratic Party already has a lock on the most anti-labour government that ever served Ontario.

**Mr Laughren:** We may be the most unpopular government ever in the eyes of Sid Ryan. That's quite possible. I would simply ask you if you think the majority of working-class people in this province believe that today.

Second, when we talk about the results of our policies being determined by June 1995, I would simply put that all governments make that argument when they get elected, and I can assure you that not all governments get re-elected. There's obviously lots of evidence of that.

I would like to thank those members who responded to my remarks. I would simply say too that there seems to be a misunderstanding by the new members of the Tory party about your views on the social contract. When we brought it in, Michael Harris was standing right over here, as a member and leader of the third party, and said, "Bring it in today; three readings, bang, bang, bang." Those were virtually his exact words. So I don't need any lectures from you people about what the social contract did for people. It tried to do a lot more for people than you will ever do in a million years.

I must say that the member for Hamilton Centre makes an excellent point when he talks about the approach of this government to women. It's no surprise there's a gender gap when it comes to polling on the popularity of this government, because if there's one perception out there it's that this government is anti-labour and, more specifically, anti-women, and you deserve it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Carroll:** I only have a very few minutes left, but I would like to address one small issue. We hear a lot in the House about health care and what our government's reaction has been to health care. I'd like to quote from an article called "A Hospital Perspective on Bill 136." This article talks about, "The restructuring that is now taking place at the municipal level in education and indeed in health care represents formidable challenges for the institutions responsible for providing services to the public." I think we all accept that.

It goes on to say: "There are many risks associated with change in the hospital sector; under current processes, implementing the changes required in the time frames required is not possible." Bill 136 would make these changes possible. "That's why hospitals support this bill. In our view, the legislation has many positives in terms of how labour issues are handled in the hospital sector. The changes will improve the collective bargaining process in the broader public sector so that it is more responsive to current realities both for the long term and the short term."

It goes on to say, "The legislation has been framed to balance the needs of employees, employers and taxpayers, and would result in: a fast-track and fair method of resolving representation issues; a more rational, consistent and fairer treatment of collective agreements."

It further goes on to say: "In labour relations, negotiated solutions are the ideal but this may not always be possible given the complexity of the human resources issues that need to be resolved.... Bill 136 does not do away with the collective bargaining process, but where

negotiated solutions are not possible, it would provide a mechanism for a more fair, equitable and expeditious resolution of issues, without detracting from anyone's fundamental rights." An interesting perspective on Bill 136 from the hospital sector, probably the sector that will be impacted the most profoundly by it.

I appreciate the opportunity to put those comments into the record.

**The Acting Speaker:** It now being almost 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 am.

*The House adjourned at 2131.*

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Constituency<br>Circonscription | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti |
|---|---|
| Algoma | Wildman, Bud (ND) |
| Algoma-Manitoulin | Brown, Michael A. (L) |
| Beaches-Woodbine | Lankin, Frances (ND) |
| Brampton North / -Nord | Spina, Joseph (PC) |
| Brampton South / -Sud | Clement, Tony (PC) |
| Brant-Haldimand | Preston, Peter L. (PC) |
| Brantford | Johnson, Ron (PC) |
| Bruce | Fisher, Barbara (PC) |
| Burlington South / -Sud | **Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des pernonnes âgées) |
| Cambridge | Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) |
| Carleton | **Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.** (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Carleton East / -Est | Morin, Gilles E. (L) |
| Chatham-Kent | Carroll, Jack (PC) |
| Cochrane North / -Nord | Wood, Len (ND) |
| Cochrane South / -Sud | Bisson, Gilles (ND) |
| Cornwall | Cleary, John C. (L) |
| Don Mills | **Johnson, Hon / L'hon David** (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Dovercourt | Silipo, Tony (ND) |
| Downsview | Castrilli, Annamarie (L) |
| Dufferin-Peel | Tilson, David (PC) |
| Durham Centre / -Centre | Flaherty, Jim (PC) |
| Durham East / -Est | O'Toole, John R. (PC) |
| Durham West / -Ouest | **Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet** (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Durham-York | Munro, Julia (PC) |
| Eglinton | **Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William** (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Elgin | North, Peter (Ind) |
| Essex-Kent | Hoy, Pat (L) |
| Essex South / -Sud | Crozier, Bruce (L) |
| Etobicoke-Humber | Ford, Douglas B. (PC) |
| Etobicoke-Lakeshore | Kells, Morley (PC) |
| Etobicoke-Rexdale | Hastings, John (PC) |
| Etobicoke West / -Ouest | **Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris** (PC) Speaker / président |
| Fort William | McLeod, Lyn (L) |
| Fort York | Marchese, Rosario (ND) |
| Frontenac-Addington | Vankoughnet, Bill (PC) |
| Grey-Owen Sound | Murdoch, Bill (PC) |
| Guelph | Elliott, Brenda (PC) |
| Halton Centre / -Centre | Young, Terence H. (PC) |
| Halton North / -Nord | Chudleigh, Ted (PC) |
| Hamilton Centre / -Centre | Christopherson, David (ND) |
| Hamilton East / -Est | Agostino, Dominic (L) |
| Hamilton Mountain | Pettit, Trevor (PC) |
| Hamilton West / -Ouest | Ross, Lillian (PC) |
| Hastings-Peterborough | Danford, Harry (PC) |
| High Park-Swansea | Shea, Derwyn (PC) |
| Huron | Johns, Helen (PC) |
| Kenora | Miclash, Frank (L) |
| Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles | Gerretsen, John (L) |
| Kitchener | Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC) |
| Kitchener-Wilmot | Leadston, Gary L. (PC) |
| Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon | Pouliot, Gilles (ND) |
| Lambton | Beaubien, Marcel (PC) |
| Lanark-Renfrew | Jordan, W. Leo (PC) |
| Lawrence | Cordiano, Joseph (L) |
| Leeds-Grenville | **Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.** (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels |
| Lincoln | Sheehan, Frank (PC) |
| London Centre / -Centre | Boyd, Marion (ND) |
| London North / -Nord | **Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne** (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| London South / -Sud | Wood, Bob (PC) |
| Markham | **Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.** (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Middlesex | Smith, Bruce (PC) |
| Mississauga East / -Est | DeFaria, Carl (PC) |
| Mississauga North / -Nord | **Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John** (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Mississauga South / -Sud | Marland, Margaret (PC) |
| Mississauga West / -Ouest | **Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation) |
| Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne | Grimmett, Bill (PC) |

| Constituency<br>Circonscription | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti |
|---|---|
| Nepean | Baird, John R. (PC) |
| Niagara Falls | Maves, Bart (PC) |
| Niagara South / -Sud | Hudak, Tim (PC) |
| Nickel Belt | Laughren, Floyd (ND) |
| Nipissing | **Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.** (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif |
| Norfolk | Barrett, Toby (PC) |
| Northumberland | Galt, Doug (PC) |
| Oakville South / -Sud | Carr, Gary (PC) |
| Oakwood | Colle, Mike (L) |
| Oriole | Vacant |
| Oshawa | Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) |
| Ottawa Centre / -Centre | Patten, Richard (L) |
| Ottawa East / -Est | Grandmaître, Bernard (L) |
| Ottawa-Rideau | Guzzo, Garry J. (PC) |
| Ottawa South / -Sud | McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition |
| Ottawa West / -Ouest | Vacant |
| Oxford | Hardeman, Ernie (PC) |
| Parkdale | Ruprecht, Tony (L) |
| Parry Sound | **Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.** (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances |
| Perth | Johnson, Bert (PC) |
| Peterborough | Stewart, R. Gary (PC) |
| Port Arthur | Gravelle, Michael (L) |
| Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell | Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) |
| Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince EdwardLennox-Hastings-Sud | Fox, Gary (PC) |
| Quinte | Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC) |
| Rainy River | Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Renfrew North / -Nord | Conway, Sean G. (L) |
| Riverdale | Churley, Marilyn (ND) |
| S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est | Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones |
| St Andrew-St Patrick | Bassett, Isabel (PC) |
| St Catharines | Bradley, James J. (L) |
| St Catharines-Brock | Froese, Tom (PC) |
| St George-St David | Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Sarnia | Boushy, Dave (PC) |
| Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie | Martin, Tony (ND) |
| Scarborough-Agincourt | Phillips, Gerry (L) |
| Scarborough Centre / -Centre | Newman, Dan (PC) |
| Scarborough East / -Est | Gilchrist, Steve (PC) |
| Scarborough-Ellesmere | **Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn** (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Scarborough North / -Nord | Curling, Alvin (L) |
| Scarborough West / -Ouest | Brown, Jim (PC) |
| Simcoe Centre / -Centre | Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) |
| Simcoe East / -Est | McLean, Allan K. (PC) |
| Simcoe West / -Ouest | **Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim** (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé |
| Sudbury | Bartolucci, Rick (L) |
| Sudbury East / -Est | Martel, Shelley (ND) |
| Timiskaming | Ramsay, David (L) |
| Victoria-Haliburton | **Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris** (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Waterloo North / -Nord | **Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth** (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail |
| Welland-Thorold | Kormos, Peter (ND) |
| Wellington | Arnott, Ted (PC) |
| Wentworth East / -Est | Doyle, Ed (PC) |
| Wentworth North / -Nord | Skarica, Toni (PC) |
| Willowdale | **Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles** (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Wilson Heights | Kwinter, Monte (L) |
| Windsor-Riverside | Vacant |
| Windsor-Sandwich | Pupatello, Sandra (L) |
| Windsor-Walkerville | Duncan, Dwight (L) |
| York Centre / -Centre | **Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al** (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports |
| York East / -Est | Parker, John L. (PC) |
| York Mills | Turnbull, David (PC) |
| York-Mackenzie | Klees, Frank (PC) |
| Yorkview | Sergio, Mario (L) |
| York South / -Sud | Kennedy, Gerard (L) |

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

## Wednesday 27 August 1997

### SECOND READINGS

**Public Sector Transition Stability Act, 1997,** Bill 136, *Mrs Witmer*
Mrs Boyd.....11583, 11586
Mr Maves.....11585, 11598
Mr Patten.....11585, 11588, 11603
11606
Mr Christopherson .....11585, 11588
11593, 11598, 11600, 11604
11606
Mr Gravelle.....11586, 11601, 11604
Mr Arnott.....11586, 11589
Mr Gilchrist.....11589, 11593, 11606
Mr Cleary.....11589, 11600
Mrs McLeod.....11589, 11594
Mr Miclash.....11593
Mr Bisson.....11594, 11598
Mr Carroll.....11597, 11607
Mr Ruprecht.....11597
Mr Stewart.....11599, 11601
Mr O'Toole.....11600
Mr Wildman.....11603
Mrs Munro.....11603
Mr Laughren.....11605, 11607
Debate deemed adjourned.....11608

# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mercredi 27 août 1997

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 visant à assurer la stabilité au cours de la transition dans le secteur public,** projet de loi 136, *M^me^ Witmer*
M. Bisson.....11597
M. Lalonde.....11601
Débat présumé ajourné.....11608

CA2 ON
X1
-D23

Government
Publications

No. 221

Nº 221

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Thursday 28 August 1997**

**Jeudi 28 août 1997**

NOV 1 1997

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 August 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 août 1997

*The House met at 1001.*
*Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** I move that in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should ensure that the government of Ontario send to Ontario health insurance plan account holders a statement summarizing the monthly activity in their respective account each month there is account activity, and the statements indicate the expense of the provided health care service, the amount covered by the Ontario health insurance plan and the name of the health care worker who provided the service.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Ford:** I'm pleased to stand in this chamber today to advocate for changes in the way billings are managed in the Ontario health insurance plan. I'm also pleased because this is an opportunity for all members in this chamber to make a positive contribution towards our health care system.

As members of this Legislature, we all have issues which are most important to us for a variety of reasons. The resolution I present before us today is one which affects everyone in Ontario and is an opportunity to improve one of the finest health care systems in the world.

This government wants Ontario's health care system to continue to have a positive international reputation. In fact, the financial allocation for health care in the recent provincial budget is the highest in Ontario's history. This obviously sends a clear message that this government is fully committed to making sure all patients receive the best care possible.

But I ask myself, what can I do to make our health care system in Ontario more accountable to the taxpayers of this province and preserve it for future generations?

Having served on a hospital board for a significant period, I'm quite familiar with the working environment of the health care community. This environment is one that contains a lot of dedicated professionals concerned about the wellbeing of others. Their time and determination to find solutions to health care concerns is appreciated by thousands of people every day. It is to these dedicated professionals and the people of Ontario to whom I dedicate this resolution.

To begin my remarks, I thought I would start off with a review of how recent governments have attempted to grasp control of accountability within OHIP, only to let it slip out of their fingers.

In 1986, with good intentions, the Liberal government approved the replacement of the Ontario health insurance plan family-based registration system with an individual-based registration system. However, only one year later, the 1987 auditor's report found that there were 24.7 million OHIP subscribers in the province, almost triple the province's population of nine million, and that the computer system was outmoded.

In January 1990, final approval was given for the universal registration project at an estimated cost of $31.5 million and it began a few months later by having plastic health cards issued. Not surprisingly, cost increases in the registration project developed and when the NDP came into government, they approved an additional $6 million to cover costs.

After reviewing the matter again, the Provincial Auditor produced another report in 1992 which stated, "In the ministry's bid to get the new system in place as quickly as possible, they intentionally limited eligibility and accuracy verification."

There was already confusion in the NDP government because, as of January 1993, there were 12.2 million health cards provided, while 1.4 million of them were ineligible.

A year later, the NDP announced a new photo system at a cost of $90 million for three years and a $19-million annual cost every year thereafter. However, ministry sources put the price of the registration project at $189 million with annual costs of $25.5 million in subsequent years.

The public's blood continued to boil as their frustration grew and millions of dollars in taxpayers' money continued to be tossed away. They had every reason to be upset. The matter of OHIP accountability was obviously being mismanaged.

At election time in 1990, the Liberals wanted their health card system in place quickly as an electioneering tool and were willing to sacrifice the necessary anti-fraud and verification procedures to do it. In the haste to be seen to be taking action on the problem during the 1990 campaign, the Liberals decided to use the existing imperfect

database to issue new health cards rather than reinvesting the time and money to improve the database.

Even during the 1995 provincial election, the Liberals promised to design a health card system that eliminated fraud and abuse, but provided no specifics on how it would be done. At that same time, the NDP maintained their health card system would solve fraud and abuse problems, while security experts said it alone would not be enough to eliminate fraud.

After health card mismanagement by two governments, the time of insensibility has come to an end. It's time to be aggressive about rooting out health card fraud so that the money saved can be reinvested towards front-line services for patients.

I know the Minister of Health is committed to seeing results on this very problem. Already there's evidence of that. In fact, since the people of Ontario elected us, the minister has instituted measures to obtain the results the public deserves.

Within six months of taking office, the ministry's computer network was upgraded to weed out and cancel duplicate health cards. The government created a 1-800 fraud line to report any instances of health care fraud. Health card verification technology has been further utilized and close to 700,000 health cards are verified each month. A former commissioner with the RCMP was hired by the ministry to assist in eliminating fraud in the health care system.

The benefits from these initiatives will allow us to reinvest savings towards front-line services. For this reason, I have presented a resolution which compliments the minister's efforts and will allow taxpayers to play a part in the effort to make our health care system even stronger.

Voting against this regulation will restrict front-line services from receiving additional funding that would otherwise have been lost to fraud. Essentially, it's like putting a brick wall in front of an ailing person.

I know all members of this chamber want everyone in Ontario to have a healthy future. For this reason, I encourage all of you to vote in favour of this resolution.

**1010**

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I commend the member for Etobicoke-Humber on bringing this resolution forward for debate this morning. But let's go back to take a look at what is actually happening today in health care and the mess that has been created over the past two short years by this government, in terms of health care. There are many aspects of health care that I would think the member might have wanted to speak on today, might have wanted to bring to the attention of the health minister, his cabinet colleagues and his colleagues in the government caucus.

We have to remember that health care in our province is probably one of our proudest achievements, something governments in the past have worked on to develop, to make it that, a very proud achievement of government. But now we have a resolution coming forward based on mistrust. He's basing the resolution on the mistrust of not only the patients but the health care workers, the medical professionals that we depend on every day. It is not, by any means, common sense or revolutionary when we come forward with a resolution based on mistrust of those people out there on the front lines, of the patients who use what, again, I consider one of the greatest achievements in this province, our health care system. For those people who are working in it, I feel the member has actually said that we now mistrust that profession.

When we talk about the health care system in Ontario, I just said that in the past two years we've seen it deteriorate to a point where it is scary for some of the people that have to make use of it. I think of a woman here in Toronto who had to deliver her baby behind a counter. We're not talking about some Third World country; we're talking about right here in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

To go back to the member's resolution, why isn't he talking about some of these deficiencies, some of the things that are happening, the insecurities, the worries patients have?

My constituents have to travel to receive much of their health care, whether it be into another province, into Winnipeg, or whether it be some five or six hours to Thunder Bay. A lot of that travel is done in very adverse weather conditions. I thought the member would be speaking a little more about how we can get health care to patients where they need it, when they need it.

I think we have an obligation to make sure that the health care system does work. As I've indicated, it's one of our greatest assets, something that members on all sides of the House are very proud of in terms of achievement. But I don't feel that coming at the health care system and those who use it in this way is going to be beneficial to many. Changes need to be made, but change has come about, and we can't really go ahead with changes if they're going to be destructive. I feel this resolution is being destructive in that it puts much mistrust into our system.

When we listen carefully to the resolution put forward this morning, we hear the voice of the government's real leader. This is actually a resolution that I would have expected from somebody like Preston Manning of the Reform Party. If you take a close look at the wording, it very much sounds like Preston Manning speaking to us here this morning, a resolution based on mistrust of not only the people who receive it but the health care givers.

I think of our health care system as being one of the greatest national treasures we have. It's a defining element of our society, one we must certainly protect. What the member is doing here is putting much mistrust into that system. Because of that system we have a quality of life here in Ontario which is the best in the world, again something that we on all sides should be very proud of, the medicare we've developed here in Ontario and Canada.

Even though we have to take a look at moving ahead in some areas, there are many other areas this member could have looked at in terms of ensuring a good health care system in our province. He might have wanted to look at some of the crises being created by his Minister of Health at the present time, the unnecessary crises being created,

to look at how we could maybe have averted or brought solutions to some of those.

A system to bill patients, to show them their billings, when we have line-ups in emergency rooms is not something I would have considered a priority of any member in this House. Some of my constituents face many crises in terms of the health care system, whether it has been travelling outside of the region, whether it has been the ability to gain access to front-line health care when they actually need it in our local institution. These are things my constituents face every day. Seeing their bills at the end of the month is really not a priority to them at this time.

As I have indicated, the member's resolution is worth review, but I think he should have taken a little closer look at how we could have cleaned up some of the mess that has been created in our health care system today.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I commend the member Mr Ford for bringing in this resolution. I assume he brings it in in the form of a resolution as opposed to a private member's bill because of the rules surrounding private members' bills, in that they're not allowed to spend government money. This resolution of course would cost money. Unless I missed it, and I tried to listen to Mr Ford, I didn't hear him tell us how much it would cost to implement this system.

I see nothing wrong in principle with this system. As a matter of fact, I can recall, in another life, recommending to another health minister that we do something like this to try and make people understand how much they themselves were costing the system — not that that would mean it was illegitimate but that there would be a sense of accountability, that people themselves would say, "I cost the system so much this month," and I think some people would be very surprised. Also, of course, it would put an element of accountability back on the person delivering the service, such as the doctor. I thought it was not a bad thing to have that happen.

But the response I got from health ministers was that, no, it's too complicated and, second, that the medical profession would go berserk if you imposed this upon them, because they would have to be part of this exercise — presumably it wouldn't be done without their cooperation and without their agreement — and they would never agree to that. I don't know that for sure, but I must say that I personally don't think it's such a bad thing to have this degree of accountability in the system, but we've got to get the doctors on side.

It would be very simple, it seems to me, for each doctor at the end of the month, or quarterly, if you wish – I don't really care – to send to their patients what services they had provided. That would be a very simple form of auditing if the Ontario government wanted to audit that. They could at any point do a random audit to determine whether what had been delivered was what the doctor had billed OHIP for. I'm not imputing motives here to the doctors, but it seems to me that it's a caution that the system needs. Right now, there are very few checks and balances on how the doctors bill the system, and I think this would not be an entirely bad thing.

**1020**

I must say, though, I was a bit taken aback by the very partisan nature of the member's remarks when he's trying to get support for a private member's resolution. I remember that the Liberals had trouble with the health card and we had trouble with the health card. When we were developing a new card, I was always taken aback by how expensive these cards were, because we were trying to develop a smart card that would have all sorts of information encoded in it. I'm not quarrelling with Mr Ford's numbers. I've forgotten some of them specifically, but I think he's done his research well in that those probably are the correct numbers, of $129 million to set it up, I think he said, and then $25 million per annum to keep it going. Those are very high numbers.

I can remember the present Minister of Health, Mr Jim Wilson, who was then the health critic for the third party, the PCs, the Tories, on his feet ranting and raving as only Jim Wilson can rant and rave, and he ranted and raved in opposition much more dramatically and with much more flair than he ever has done in government. I miss that part of Jim Wilson, but nevertheless I think his health is probably better because of it. He was on his feet in this Legislature claiming that the existing health cards, because of the element of fraud, were costing the taxpayers of this province something like $700 million a year. It was as high as that. Guess what? Here we are in the third year of the Tories' mandate and we've got the same cards. Isn't that irresponsible on the part of the health minister, to say one day that the system is costing fraud of up to $700 million a year and then not do anything about it for over two years? I don't know where his head is at. Well, I'm afraid to guess.

**Mr Ford:** What about the 1-800 number?

**Mr Laughren:** You can say that setting up a 1-800 number and hiring a retired Mountie is going to solve the problem. Well, excuse me. I've seen the Mounties in operation and I'm not impressed.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Laughren:** I'm not impressed by the RCMP. I don't care what the member opposite says, I've seen them in operation for too long. If you think that hiring an out-to-pasture RCMP officer and setting up a 1-800 number is going to solve $700 million worth of fraud — the minister said that the problem was not that; the problem was the cards. That's what he said. He said the problem was the cards. Where are the new smart cards? I don't see them anywhere.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** The fingerprints are coming.

**Mr Laughren:** Yes, they'll fingerprint everybody in the province and that'll solve the problem.

I must say that I come to this debate not closed-minded about it, because I think there does need to be more accountability in the system, but I think it's also important to hold the present Minister of Health accountable for what he said when he was in opposition and what he has not done now that he's in government. That's what's lacking in this debate at this point.

I think Mr Ford's intentions are correct, but I don't think the equation is complete without him telling us how much this is going to cost, because that's the argument you'll get. If you go to the Minister of Health or the Minister of Finance and say, "This is what we want to do," they will come back at you very quickly and tell you how much it costs, and perhaps they'll use the argument as well that "No, no, this would upset the medical profession."

It seems to me you've given the medical profession enough of a raise that they should swallow hard and accept something like this. That's what they should do. Now's the time to go after them. They should be happy. They should be falling down on their knees in gratitude for the way you've treated them, so maybe this is the time to say to them, "Now it's time for you to deliver some more accountability in the system." It shouldn't be only the long-suffering taxpayer who provides accountability and pays for it. That should be part of the cost of operating a medical office.

Why shouldn't it be? If I go and get my car fixed and I don't have to pay the mechanic that day, you can be sure that at the end of the month I'll get a bill from him telling me what it is I owe him and what service he provided for that money. When I go to my doctor I give him my health card and that's the end of it. I happen to believe that the doctors with whom I deal have been very honest and very professional, but who knows? I don't know what bills are sent in to OHIP and nobody else does either. All I know is that OHIP pays them.

I remember a number of years ago going into the OHIP office in Sudbury, when there used to be an OHIP office there, and saying, "How do you know if a doctor is overbilling the system?" This was 20 years ago. They said to me, "We have a system that if they bill more than $10,000 a month we do a quickie audit." That's 20 years ago; that would be the equivalent of $30,000 or $40,000 a month now, I presume. That's not very much of an audit on the system. I think it's time something is done. I think it's time the medical profession comes to grips with this, because I think they at least owe the system that much.

I think I will support this resolution. I want to do a little more thinking about it in the next hour, but I think I will support this resolution because it does bring some accountability into the system. I regret the tone of some of the words of Mr Ford, but I don't question at all his motivation or the reason he has brought this forward. I thought he took some cheap shots in his remarks that were unnecessary, but I've been known to do the same thing so I should hardly pass judgement on Mr Ford.

As I say, the jury's still out with me, but I've got an opportunity now to listen to some of the comments from the other members. I will decide at 12 o'clock whether I'm going to support Mr Ford's resolution.

**Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia):** I'll keep my remarks very short, very brief, not because of any lack of interest in this resolution but because it's so straightforward. I don't think it takes any philosophy to figure out that this resolution makes sense. This resolution, if adopted as a policy, would serve as both an educational tool and an additional safeguard against health fraud.

First, it would give all Ontarians a better idea of how their tax dollars are being spent. In that sense I consider this resolution to be a matter of freedom of information as well. I don't buy the criticism that's just been expressed that providing an expense statement is a scheme to put pressure on sick people not to visit their doctor or pressure on the system itself. Perhaps this would prevent an otherwise healthy person who has a stuffy nose from visiting the hospital emergency some Sunday afternoon or Sunday morning — I have no problem with that — but if someone truly needs to see the doctor, I doubt they change their mind because of any guilt regarding how much it costs the system.

Although many Ontarians have visits to the dentist covered by benefit packages — I have one, and I get the expense statements; they are made for me and all the patients — to my knowledge this has not prevented anyone from making a dental appointment. It certainly did not do that to me. Nor would a similar statement of account of health care have any effect whatsoever.

Everybody already knows that health care is not free. We all pay for it through our taxes and it is there for us to use. However, by making it widely known what the exact costs of health services are, expense statements would lead to more informed public debate when it comes to health care. More important to me, it would be empowering every individual to effectively stand guard against health care fraud. It would also cast aside any suspicions individuals may have regarding health providers. We have all read or heard about the small number of health care providers who have billed inaccurately for services performed. Unfortunately, even one bad apple can unfairly cast a negative perception on an entire profession. But by showing patients what their health provider has billed OHIP in black and white, we can remove all doubts and ensure that the good reputation that our health providers deserve continues untarnished.

I want to commend my friend Mr Ford for introducing a long-overdue idea for debate. This resolution is a simple resolution. It's not an earth-shaking resolution. It's a commonsense resolution. It certainly has my support and I hope both sides of this assembly will vote for it.

**1030**

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I'm very happy to speak on this resolution. This is a matter that has been around for some time and we've had discussions about this on previous occasions.

I can recall that when I was the chairman of the public accounts committee and we dealt with health care fraud in the early 1990s, that question was uppermost in people's minds. There was a great deal of discussion around having a proper information system. To accomplish that we needed an integrated health care system, one that was able to tie someone receiving health care in a hospital to what doctors were doing in their local offices, to what community health clinics were doing etc. The model just wasn't there for an information system to be effective.

What you really need to accomplish what you're suggesting — and by the way, to be able to report all of these expenses in a monthly statement — is a system that, in addition to having that statement, will integrate the health care that is provided right around the province. We're not quite there yet. When we introduced the health cards as the government, in the next step we were going to follow that up with an education program, and in addition to that provide an information management system.

To this day, the Ministry of Health has not come up with that type of system. As a result, you have a hodgepodge, sort of a helter-skelter approach to understanding what in fact is occurring in the health care system. You need that information system to be able to manage health care in a more comprehensive fashion so we can determine where resources should go in the future. That is lacking.

I think the member would also like to reflect on what his government is doing with respect to that. I don't believe for an instance that this government's priorities are in the right order. They have focused on — what? — closing hospitals. Closing hospitals to effect the kind of change we've been talking about? I don't think so. I think the priority on the part of this government should have been to manage a system that would be comprehensive, a system that would be integrated, that would allow us to manage the health care system by dedicating resources, allocating them in a proper fashion.

You need health practitioners to be involved in that. You need not just doctors, but all the health practitioners to be involved in that kind of integrated system. You need to look at the health care system in a more comprehensive way so that you have the ability then to manage the system through the information that's gathered. If you lack that information, then obviously you're not able to hold, not only the system accountable in a financial sense but accountable in terms of its effectiveness, so that proper planning can take place, so that we can plan for future allocations, future needs in the system.

The current sitting Chair also put forward some proposals at the time with respect to health cards which would have enhanced the ability of the cards to screen out fraudulent cases that were brought forward, to screen out abuse. I can recall the recommendations that the member who is sitting in the chair currently, the member for Carleton East, was making in those days, which would have made the cards far more effective as a device for screening abuse and fraud.

Again, that's part of the story. I think what this fails to recognize is that we don't have an integrated information system. We don't have a health care system. We have a series of services that are available. You would go see your family physician; you might go see a specialist; you might go to the hospital; you might go to a clinic. All of these separate venues, separate ways of accessing the system, are not tied together so that we can in fact understand what's going on.

Before we move in this direction, it would be very useful to get a full debate on what's going on in health care today, what this government is doing by way of priority to dismantle the system. It's not making the system more comprehensive; it's not integrating the services that are being provided; it's not doing any of that. What it's doing is taking away services by closing hospitals, by ensuring that there is chaos in the system and that there are gaps in services through this transitional period.

Even though we don't support the closure of hospitals, you still haven't got a way to deal with the transitional period in an effective fashion. We're seeing example after example each and every day of people being shuttled around from one hospital to another. We heard about women who were having babies in hallways because there aren't enough facilities. We heard about another situation where a man died in a hallway in a Peterborough hospital.

This is the state of health care in Ontario, and therefore we should be recognizing that the priority has to be to make sure the system is working effectively and providing the services that are necessary.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Cordiano:** Otherwise, I say to the backbenchers, if you're listening, you're going to pay the political price come 1999.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Niagara Falls, you're not in your seat.

Go ahead, you still have two minutes.

**Mr Cordiano:** My colleague was going to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'll have to recognize the member for Sault Ste Marie first. We'll go in rotation.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Are we going to stop the time, Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Whatever time is left, you'll get it. Now I will recognize the member for Sault Ste Marie. No?

**Mr Cordiano:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We lost 30 seconds on that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We'll make sure that you get it. Further debate?

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I stand today in support of the resolution before the House from the member for Etobicoke-Humber. He's put a lot of thought into this because he knows how precious each dollar of health care spending is, and he knows people want to make sure it's going to the right place, for priority services for the people of Ontario, who give up some hard-earned tax dollars and want to know they're getting the best system possible for their tax dollars. That fits in exactly with what the Ministry of Health is doing with its changes, to make sure the patient gets the right care, at the right place, at the right time.

Mr Ford's resolution hits on two important fronts. First of all, it educates the taxpayer and the recipient of Canada's finest health care system about how much it costs for a particular service and, more importantly, it brings some accountability to the system so they know that dollars are actually going to the services that are brought forward to OHIP and they know the services are delivered in the best manner possible, to make sure the patients are getting the best care possible out there.

There are a number of methods I want to bring to the House's attention, and the public watching today, in terms of what the ministry has done so far and continues to do to provide education on how health care works in Ontario and, importantly too, to make sure that accountability exists, that dollars are going to the right place for the best possible system of health care in Canada and North America, and in fact with the goal of being the best health care system in the world.

If an individual wants to know how much a particular service cost, or the service they had in a particular year or a time or a place, it's rather simple to do. They can easily go through the information and privacy office and make that request, which will tell them the cost of the services they received, what's been billed to OHIP under their name. In addition, following Mr Ford's suggestions, we do mail out about 170,000 verification notices each year. The way that works is that verification notice is sent out randomly across the province and it will list a particular individual, the services that individual had, the provider of that service and the approximate cost to the taxpayer of that service. We ask that individual to say, "Yes, Tim Hudak had this particular service on this date," to verify that it was the provider who did that service, to make sure that billing through OHIP is done completely accurately and to get rid of any inaccurate billings through the OHIP system.

**1040**

In fact, Ontarians care so much about how their tax dollars are spent, especially on health care, that we have an over 70% reporting rate on the verification to say, "Yes, this is a service I had," or if not, then it goes back through OHIP to distinguish what happened and to correct any inaccuracies and also to act as a deterrent, to make sure each OHIP billing, those precious health care dollars, are services delivered to the hardworking people of Ontario. It's an excellent system.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** That's good.

**Mr Hudak:** The member for Niagara Falls likes that system. I'm pleased to tell the member and the rest of the House that it's the goal of the ministry to double what we're doing in that area in the near future, so even more notices to verify that health care dollars are being spent at the right place, at the right time.

Furthermore, there's been some talk, starting with the member for Etobicoke-Humber, about the number of OHIP cards that were sent out by the Peterson Liberal government, a crime in term of taxpayers' money wasted by improper cards being issued to everybody, let alone Ontario residents, but going to Americans who don't pay taxes in Ontario into the system. There were cases I remember back in the Peterson government, and the member for Niagara Falls may remember this too, in terms of animals getting OHIP cards. Minister Wilson did, in opposition, speak very strongly about that, saying that health care dollars cannot be going to somebody's pony or somebody's dog. Since being in office, the minister has moved very swiftly to make sure the OHIP cards charging our system go to Ontario taxpayers and no one else — no dogs, no horses, no people from out-of-country — to make sure those dollars go to Ontario residents.

I'll give you some examples. Since taking office in 1995, 1.7 million people receiving new or replacement health cards have gone through very strict eligibility tests. The records are updated constantly as a result of agreements with the registrar general and Immigration Canada. We've engaged in reciprocal interprovincial agreements that notify the ministry when residents relocate to provinces outside Ontario. They would no longer be eligible to receive benefits or make claims in Ontario if they live in other provinces or countries.

We are working with the RCMP and I think they do an excellent job. I disagree strongly with the member for Nickel Belt. I've worked with the RCMP, and in my experience in having worked on the border at Canada Customs with the RCMP, I would give glowing praise to the hardworking members of the RCMP, the work they've done in Niagara. We work with them and Immigration Canada to retrieve invalid health cards.

The three measures I mentioned above have resulted, the member for Etobicoke-Humber will be glad to see, in 14,000 corrections per month to our health care records, making up for those Liberal OHIP cards that were sent out in the late 1980s — I forget what he said; some 20 million I think was the number he quoted — 14,000 corrections per month making up for that mistake by the previous Peterson-McGuinty government. There were way too many cards, like I said, going to all kinds of people and animals and creatures that don't pay taxes into the system.

We've also increased the number of voice-activated health card verification units in the province, to call and make sure that card belongs to whom it says it does, by over 1,300 of these machines, and 18,000 health professionals throughout Ontario now verify patients' health numbers by phone. There are now more than 2,500 Visa-type swipe units in doctors' offices, in hospitals, in labs and pharmacies to verify the accuracy of these cards. In my riding of Niagara South I've received several comments from health care professionals who say that's a great idea. At some time, being along the border, we had some people from other countries coming in with fraudulent OHIP cards and charging those dollars to the Ontario taxpayer. I certainly praise the actions of this government and the Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, in expanding that number of swipe units to verify that these cards belong to whom they say they belong and they are Ontario taxpayers and Ontario residents. That number has gone up significantly.

Let me say too that we have created a 1-800 fraud line to report to the government instances of health care fraud that are followed up very closely. For those members and those watching who may not know the number, it's 1-800-268-1154. I'd urge all members here today who are paying rapt attention to my speech, my remarks on this issue, to write that down, I would suggest, because your constituents may be calling, having heard my remarks. I say to my fellow parliamentary assistant, the member for

Scarborough Centre, 1-800-268-1154. The member for Niagara Falls already has it memorized.

I think the member across, for Kenora, in his remarks didn't have any regard for getting accountancy into the system. He talked about any kinds of verifications or methods to make sure health care dollars are going to the right place as somehow developing mistrust in the system. I guess that's the same kind of attitude that caused the Peterson-McGuinty Liberals to send out whatever it was, 20-some million health cards, because they wanted to get those red and white cards out there before an election or something like that. They didn't really care whom it was going to and treated taxpayers' dollars and health care dollars without the due concern they deserve.

You can see that the attitude that you should just throw the money at the situation and not try to direct health care dollars to priority areas still exists in the Liberal Party today when you hear the remarks from the member for Kenora, who doesn't seem at all to apologize for the dreadful waste of taxpayers' dollars that we're still making up for in Ontario today.

Every dollar saved goes into priority care services like kidney dialysis, more money into cancer care, more money into treating heart disease. In fact, the member talked about what he viewed as an important area: emergency rooms in rural and northern communities. Certainly without the actions of this minister and this government to keep open approximately 70 emergency rooms across the province that would have closed if this government had not acted, residents in those 70 communities would have gone without emergency services. But we know the priorities in the province, invested the money in those emergency rooms and kept open approximately 70 rural and northern emergency units. With the recent release of the rural and northern health care framework, the ministry has recognized, and is reinforcing the importance of, receiving health care close to home, with 24-hour access to emergency services in those communities so that they can get the care at the right place, at the right time.

At the same time Norman Inkster, an esteemed member of the RCMP and currently working with KPMG Investigation and Security Inc, has been given the ability to do a special investigation into OHIP and other types of health care fraud to make recommendations to the minister for improvement. We expect Mr Inkster's report in the coming months.

You can see clearly the difference here between the Conservatives and the Liberals. Mr Ford, the member for Etobicoke-Humber, very strongly wants to see health care dollars going to the right place at the right time. He wants to see some accountability. Compare that to the party across the floor, now in official opposition, that sent out millions of health care cards helter-skelter across the province. I don't even know, the member for Kenora, if they're going to support this resolution to bring accountability to and reinforce accountability in the system to make sure the health care dollars go to the right place at the right time. Mr Speaker, those are my remarks.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I am pleased to offer a few comments in the little time I have. I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke-Humber for bringing this resolution before the House because I think he's acting in very good faith. I don't think there is anyone, regardless of what political stripe we are, who doesn't think the system needs some refining.

The concern I have, and I guess it's demonstrated best by Mr Ford's introductory remarks, what concerns me the most, is the way we continue to shut out the stakeholders in Ontario.

When I first read this resolution at the beginning of the week I said: "Gee, it makes a whole lot of sense. I wonder how much real consultation he did?" I find, during his introductory remarks, that we go back to beating up the stakeholders, beating up the people of Ontario. I think Mr Ford's resolution has some merit, but I honestly believe that the Minister of Health should be taking some direction and moving in a way that will meaningfully save money for the people of Ontario. Certainly, although the resolution is worded nicely, I think it's cumbersome. I find it almost impossible to enforce and manage without spending millions and millions of dollars.

**1050**

If the Mike Harris government really wanted to change the face of health care, other than closing hospitals, or another way, a meaningful way, a way that the people of Ontario could buy into, it might want to invest some money in education and in wellness. This government is doing a miserable job of investing in the education and the wellness of the people of Ontario. This resolution does nothing for that. This resolution simply uses the big stick, the Tory big stick. It's too bad, because although there would be some merit in the Ministry of Health exploring the possibility, it would have to be managed by something that's less confrontational than this resolution indicates. That's why I won't be supporting it.

**Ms Churley:** I would like to take this opportunity to respond to ballot item 91, the private member's resolution by Mr Ford. I think I'm going to support it. There are a number of reasons why I'm going to support it, one being that I want to help the government members embarrass the Minister of Health. We know very well that the Minister of Health is not going to let this go through, as I am sure Mr Ford knows.

The Minister of Health, since he got into office after, as my colleague from —

**Mr Laughren:** Nickel Belt.

**Ms Churley:** Nickel Belt, thank you. How could I forget, especially as I sit in the chair and know all the members' seats very well?

The member for Nickel Belt said earlier that the present Minister of Health used to sit right over here, and I used to sit over there in the government benches as a cabinet minister and watch the present Minister of Health get absolutely red in the face in rage about the things our government was doing or not doing in health care. He would go on and on. His big issue was fraud in the health

care system. He continually and repeatedly ranted and raved about that.

What has he done since he got into government? A 1-800 number, as my friend from Nickel Belt has already said. We've got a 1-800 number and a retired Mountie running some I think small and ineffective — it's just a PR method, actually. I'm not going to be as hard on the RCMP as my friend from Nickel Belt is, because I have a brother in the RCMP and I'm very proud of his work.

**Mr Laughren:** He's not out to pasture.

**Ms Churley:** He's not out to pasture yet, but probably he soon will be.

Seriously, I believe it was incumbent on this Minister of Health to look at doing this sort of thing. I know it's not going to pass, because we're talking about I'm sure huge levels of bureaucracy and millions and millions of dollars to run such a system. We have to get real here. We know what the Minister of Health is going to do. He's not going to support this.

I had an all-party resolution passed here which actually concerns the Minister of Health and the Minister of Environment which members from the Conservative Party supported: the phase-out of carcinogens or suspected carcinogens which cause cancer, which is a preventive form of medicine that would save untold agony and the health care system millions of dollars down the road. The Minister of Health won't even meet with me to talk about it. So we know where this is going. I think it's a good message to send to people, however, that there is concern about the lack of accountability in the health care system.

I've always been concerned about governments that go big time after poor people to deal with fraud. That's the way it's been with this government: "Let's root out the evil; let's root out the fraud in the welfare system," for instance. I have no objection to that. When we were in government we certainly looked for fraud in that system as well. Study after study shows that fraud within the welfare system is actually very low, yet we go after it with a sledgehammer, this government in particular. Yet when we talk about the amount of money that is spent in the health care system, what has the minister done but come forward with this bogus little operation that really is not going to make very much difference, if any at all?

I don't support fraud in any public system. We need to spend money and put resources into weeding out fraud, and because there's such a lack of accountability within the health care system, the medicare system, it's important that we spend more resources and that the Minister of Health get behind this. I don't think this is going to work for a variety of reasons. The minister cannot agree, and I guess I would understand that, to spending that amount of money. But I think the minister should sit down with Mr Ford, who has obviously done some research here, and see if some system can be worked out that wouldn't be so expensive and cumbersome so that there is more accountability in the health care system. I don't think it's realistic to think that every doctor in this province is going to send out an account to all of his or her patients every month, but notwithstanding whether this resolution passes, the minister is not going to let it go anywhere anyway.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Humber, you have two minutes.

**Mr Ford:** Listening to the opposition across the floor, I understand some of the principles they're talking about, but I put my question to everybody here in the House. They say there's not that much fraud in a lot of things. In our banking system, for instance, there is not that number of bank robberies for the amount of business they do. If you were a civilian walking along the street and you saw a bank being held up, I will ask you the same thing: Would you as a citizen call the police or just ignore it?

One of our fellow members talked about the issues. The issues is this: We are here as members of the Parliament in this House to represent the public. That is our duty, to represent the public, not to represent our own self-interests. That is why they hired us, to represent them at the best service and at the most economical cost to them.

Sometimes, as members of this House, we have a little lapse of memory: The days we were running for office, the happy day we were elected to office and the days we serve our constituents. To me, that's what I'm doing here. I'm trying to find ways and means of serving our constituents, regardless of what stripe, what colour or what political background, so that we can service them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time for the first ballot item has expired.

**1100**

## UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS' DAY ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 SUR LE JOUR DES LOYALISTES DE L'EMPIRE-UNI

Mr Danford moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act proclaiming United Empire Loyalists' Day / Projet de loi 150, Loi proclamant le jour des Loyalistes de l'Empire-Uni.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), you have 10 minutes to make your presentation.

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** It is indeed a pleasure for me to move second reading of Bill 150, An Act proclaiming United Empire Loyalists' Day.

I would like to begin by thanking Bernice Flett of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada for her help in drafting this bill. Bernice is in the gallery today, along with so many other members of her association. Other guests as well are members of the Monarchist League of Canada; members of the Ontario Black History Society; representatives of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte; and representatives of the Queen's York Rangers, a militia regiment led by Ontario's first Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Graves Simcoe. I would also like to thank

the members of the King's Royal Regiment of New York for escorting me to the chamber this morning.

The Loyalist heritage is an important part of Ontario's history. As I am sure members will know, the original Loyalists were groups of American citizens who left America after the United States gained their independence, and they came for many reasons. Some were soldiers who settled here; some were persecuted for remaining loyal to the crown; yet others came because they were unable to fight because of their religious beliefs.

Loyalists were forced to leave the United States because of their wish to remain loyal to the crown. It was common practice to be persecuted for remaining loyal before and after the War of Independence. Loyalists at times were tarred and feathered and had other acts committed against them, not just by mobs, mind you, but by unjust laws as well. In 1776, the Provincial Congress of New York went so far as to order the purchase of all the pitch and tar necessary for the public's use and safety. Mr Speaker, I suggest to you that they did not do this to start a public roofing project.

After the Declaration of Independence in 1776, loyalty to the crown became grounds for treason. Failure to take an oath of loyalty to the state in which you lived meant possible imprisonment, confiscation of property, banishment and, yes, even death. If you did not take the oath, you became an outlaw. If you were a lawyer, doctor or other professional you could not practise. You could not be an executor of an estate, or if your neighbour owed you money, you had no redress.

The Continental Congress, in a move to bolster their treasury, recommended to the states that they appropriate the property of residents who had forfeited "the right to protection of the revolutionary government." It was recommended that states invest the proceeds of the land sales in continental loan certificates. In other words, proceeds from the sale of confiscated lands were to fund the war effort against the crown. As Loyalists began leaving the 13 colonies during the revolutionary war, large sums of money from the sale of confiscated Loyalist properties began to find their way into state treasuries. Loyalists felt they had no choice but to leave the country.

The Loyalists were Canada's first multicultural immigration. They were not just British Tories who benefited from the patronage of the crown. French Protestants, German pacifists, African-Americans, they were all part of the Loyalist migration. As a matter of fact, one of the largest groups of Loyalists was the Iroquois Confederacy, led by Joseph Brant who came to Ontario from New York state. As a reward for remaining loyal to the crown, they were given a tract of land six miles wide on either side of the Grand River and they were given land at Akwesasne near present-day Cornwall.

Many of the German and French Loyalists, who had decided to honour their oaths of loyalty to the crown or were unable to fight due to their religious beliefs, established agricultural settlements around Niagara where they supplied the British garrison there with food. These Loyalists soon moved to the area around Brantford named for the celebrated first nations chief.

By way of statistics, the Loyalist migration to Ontario began shortly after the US War of Independence and really took off after 1783. By 1788 the population of the region had passed 10,000. As a result of the Loyalist migration, one thing was certain: that changes had to be made in the way the colony was governed.

The Quebec Act of 1774 was the legislative authority that provided for the administration of what was then the province of Quebec. This was satisfactory to a majority of the population of the lower St Lawrence but not for the Loyalist settlers. The court system and land tenure system were not known to many of the new settlers and they found them very difficult to understand.

It became clear that the government needed to establish a Legislature, but it believed that divisions between the established Canadiens and the new settlers, as well as the unwieldy size and shape of the existing colony, made one Legislature impractical.

As a result of these concerns, the British government decided to introduce the Constitutional Act, which divided the province of Quebec into predominantly francophone Lower Canada and predominantly anglophone Upper Canada. It was this act that set up elected legislatures in the new provinces, and in Upper Canada it established a system of courts and land tenure modelled after Britain. The Constitutional Act received royal assent on June 19, 1791.

The Constitutional Act also provided the protection of the crown for the French language and culture in Lower Canada. It should be remembered that at this time in Britain, English Catholics could not own land, vote or hold office. As a matter of fact, it was not until 1871 that English Catholics were allowed to attend university. Yet by the Constitutional Act, Catholics were granted full participation rights in Canada. This was a very significant development in the history of our nation.

New freedoms were found in Canada at the time of the Loyalists that were not to be found in either Britain or the United States. On July 9, 1793, the Legislature of Upper Canada passed an act that put an end to slavery. This was 50 years before the same thing happened in Britain and 70 years before the famous emancipation proclamation in the United States.

The Loyalists settled much of what is now Ontario. Their impact is seen in many of our towns, universities, colleges and other institutions that bear many Loyalist names. As a matter of fact, the first Premier of Ontario, John Sandfield MacDonald, was Loyalist.

In eastern Ontario in particular, the Loyalist influence is very pronounced. In 1784, the Loyalists landed at Adolphustown in Lennox and Addington county. This was the last landing of significant size of Loyalists in Upper Canada. The counties and townships of eastern Ontario were all settled by Loyalists.

The Loyalist influence is seen all around us today. As a result of this, I believe that the Loyalist tradition belongs to all Ontarians, whether their ancestors were Loyalists or

not. The Loyalists worked on behalf of all subjects of the crown and citizens of Canada and not simply for those belonging to a Loyalist club.

The Loyalist heritage led to the development of Canada, with its bilingual, multicultural and regional traditions under the unifying context of a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. This is the tradition that sets Canada apart from other nations. We should be proud of it and celebrate it.

To be a Loyalist means more than just the ties of historic ancestry. Loyalists earned their place in Canadian history through their self-sacrificing dedication to their new country.

Distinguished Ontarians like Hal Jackman, Galen Weston and former Ontario Treasurer Robert Nixon are descended from the Loyalists, as is Brian Orser, the skater. The Right Honourable Ellen Fairclough is a Loyalist. So was former Governor General Roland Michener. Chief Joseph Deseronto of the Tyendinagas was a Loyalist. Egerton Ryerson, the founder of our public education system in Ontario, was also a Loyalist. Pauline Johnson, the Mohawk poet, was a Loyalist. First World War air ace Billy Bishop was a Loyalist, and countless other Loyalists and their descendants have given much to this province and indeed to this country.

The Loyalists complement the multicultural character of modern Ontario society. Catholic highlanders, Scottish Presbyterians, German Calvinists and Lutherans, the Dutch, all came in the Loyalist migration. A substantial number of black ex-slaves had fought for the British crown and had been freed. This group settled not only in Ontario but Nova Scotia and other British colonies in the Caribbean. These peoples have all left an indelible mark on Ontario society. This is something that we would celebrate on United Empire Loyalists' Day.

The very motto of this province, "Loyal in the beginning, so remaining," which is inscribed on our coat of arms, speaks to the contribution of the Loyalists. It was itself developed by Loyalists as a constant reminder of their role in our province's development.

In closing, I would like to ask all the members to again recognize the historic importance of the Loyalists by supporting this bill. Ontario would not be the same without the Loyalist tradition. By recognising June 19 as United Empire Loyalists' Day, we will be celebrating the Loyalist contribution, not just to Ontario but indeed to Canada. Thank you, Mr Speaker, and God save the Queen.

**1110**

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** We in the Liberal Party will of course be supporting this private member's bill. One of the things we in Canada and in Ontario sometimes are not particularly good at is recognizing our historical roots. I would like to congratulate the representatives of the group in the gallery for filling the important function of providing us with reminders on a daily basis of how this province came to be, how our history came to be. Some members would know that my educational background is in history, particularly in Canadian and Ontario and Quebec history, and I find that what these folks do is terribly important.

I also appreciate what the member has done by bringing this important bill before the Legislature, because it reminds us of our roots and the important contributions made through the years by people here in Ontario and in Canada. Sometimes, if we had a better understanding of where we've been, we could see the future much more clearly.

In speaking to this bill, I think you have to talk about revolution. I think you have to understand what happened in the present United States of America. It's significant, for example, that when we refer to it we refer to it here in Canada as the American Revolution. If you were on the other side of the border, you would refer to it as the War of Independence. That in itself speaks volumes, just the way we refer to the particular historical event.

The history of the American Revolution, at least in part, is one that comes from taxation. The American colonists, if you would believe the War of Independence kind of rhetoric, didn't want taxation without representation. They wanted to be able to make their decisions locally, so to speak, not by a far-off government, a King and Parliament that were an ocean away. That's what they would tell you. If you spoke to the British Parliament or the King at the time, he would say, "We are providing garrisons of British soldiers to protect you, and that is the reason we want you to pay for some of the cost of providing protection in these new colonies in North America."

When Quebec fell to the British — we're all aware of that — and the subsequent treaty then awarded Quebec to the British, North America changed significantly. The need for a British garrison to protect British colonies from a French colony was diminished. British policy became one of assimilation at that point in time. British policy at that time became, "We should assimilate Quebec and we should try to force immigration in North America towards Quebec so that we can achieve those goals."

To that end, you'll remember, they passed an act which prohibited American colonists from going west. They could not go beyond the mountains. The reason for that was to force North American immigration and settlement north into Quebec to have a British presence in a largely — well, totally at that point — French-speaking area. That of course caused great consternation in the American colonies or what is now the United States of America.

With the elimination of the need for paying for protection, there was also great concern about the taxation, so we had a revolution, and it was a revolution. Like all revolutions, there were victims, a great number of victims. Our province of Ontario is born largely out of the victims of that particular revolution.

Perhaps now we'll go to a little bit more history. American colonists of varied ethnic backgrounds who supported the British cause during the American Revolution came to Canada. In 1789 Lord Dorchester, the Ggovernor-in-Chief of British North America, proclaimed that Loyalists and their children should be allowed to append UE to their names, alluding to their great principle, the

unity of the empire; hence the name United Empire Loyalists. The term applied initially in the Canadian colonies alone. It was officially recognized in the Maritimes only in the 20th century. Of course, the Maritimes were not part of Canada at that point.

In determining who was eligible for war losses, Britain used a fairly precise definition. Loyalists were those born or living in the American colonies at the outbreak of the American Revolution who rendered substantial services to the royal cause during the war and who left the US by the end of the war or soon after. Those who left substantially later, mainly to gain land and to escape growing intolerance of minorities, are often called "late" Loyalists.

The Loyalists supported Britain for highly diverse reasons. Many evinced a personal loyalty to the crown or a fear that the revolution could bring chaos to America. Many agreed with the rebels that America had suffered wrongs at the hands of Britain but believed the solution could be worked out within the empire. Others, seeing themselves as weak or threatened within American society and in need of an outside defender, included linguistic and religious minorities, recent immigrants not fully integrated into the American society, blacks and Indians.

Sympathy for the crown was a dangerous sentiment. Those who defied the revolutionary forces could find themselves without civil rights, subject to mob violence or flung into prison. All the states finally taxed or confiscated Loyalist property. During the revolution over 19,000 Loyalists served Britain in specially created provincial corps, accompanied by several thousand Indians. Others spent the war in such strongholds as New York City or in refugee camps in Quebec. Between 80,000 and 100,000 people eventually fled, half of them to Canada.

The vast majority were neither well-to-do nor particularly high in social rank; most were farmers. Ethnically they were quite mixed and many were recent immigrants. White Loyalists brought sizeable contingents of slaves with them. Free blacks and escaped slaves who had fought in the Loyalist corps and as many as 2,000 Indian allies, mostly Six Nations Iroquois from New York, settled in Canada. The main waves of Loyalists came to what is now Canada in 1783 and 1784. The Maritimes became home for upwards of 30,000; Ontario became home for about 7,500; about 2,000 moved to present-day Quebec and settled in the Gaspé; 7,500 here in Ontario, as I said, along the St Lawrence and Bay of Quinte, also substantial settlements in the Niagara Peninsula and near where I was born and raised, in the Sarnia area, with subsidiary and later settlements along the Thames River; and of course the Grand River was the main focus of the Loyalist Iroquois settlement.

The Loyalist influx gave the region its first substantial population and led to the creation of a separate province, Upper Canada, later Canada West, later Ontario. Loyalists were very instrumental in establishing educational, religious, social and governmental institutions. Though greatly outnumbered by later immigrants, Loyalists and their descendants, such as Egerton Ryerson, exerted a strong and lasting influence.

Modern Canada and this province have inherited much from the Loyalists, including a certain conservatism, a preference for evolution rather than revolution in matters of government, and of course the strong tendency towards a pluralistic and heterogeneous society.

**1120**

It's hard to understand how this group has not been honoured with a day long before today, because substantially they were and still are leaders of this province and have put a stamp on this country that I think most of us who favour a pluralistic and heterogeneous and evolutionary society would appreciate.

I have here some letters in support of this. I'm bringing these to the House today on behalf of Mr Cleary, the member for Cornwall. He has received letters from quite a number of people in the Cornwall area who are very supportive of this. Of course, Cornwall has a sizeable Loyalist population. I'm just going to read one that I think would be representative of them all:

"I wish to put my support towards Bill 150 of Mr Danford, MPP for Hastings-Peterborough, for the introduction of United Empire Loyalists' Day to be 19 June.... This would be an honour to all the founding fathers of Cornwall and area, which they settled after the American War of Independence.

"This group of people were the first truly non-racial group to settle Canada. They include not only Europeans, but African slaves as well, to be free men regardless of religion, race or creed. I have three great-grandfathers who fought with Sir John Johnson's King's Royal Regiment of New York and settled the area, Philip and Peter, for whom Eamers' Corners is named, and Michael Gallinger.

"Please support this bill, as it does show a sense of pride for our local history and the history of this province."

It's signed Michael Eamer, UE.

I have quite a number of these. I recognize the support across this province for this particular bill, which I believe is overdue, and I'm very pleased that Mr Danford has brought this before the House. It is widespread. I congratulate him. I hope this adds to a sense of Ontario's history, that our children and grandchildren will more fully understand and appreciate where a province came from, the evolution it has gone through, and that we will all have a better future, a brighter future, because of this proclamation of a particular day.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I too will be supporting this piece of work brought before us in the House today by the member for Hastings-Peterborough, perhaps for different reasons than others, because I won't stand here for a second and pretend that I know a lot about the United Empire Loyalists; however, I appreciate the contribution they have made to the fabric we call Ontario today.

I think it behooves us all, enriches us all, when we recognize that contribution in the way suggested by the member. It's always valuable to recognize the threads that run through the fabric that makes up Ontario, to recognize the

contribution made by those who have participated in the history of the development of the wonderful province we all call home, for those who serve in this place here today and on behalf of the constituents we represent. Indeed this province and this country have a very rich heritage, however young that may be. We're not a country with the kind of history that some of the countries that border on us have. We have a young history that was cobbled together by numerous groups of people coming here for various reasons, some because of persecution, some to find a new land to have a family, develop a business or an interest and make it home.

I myself came to this country as an immigrant from Ireland. We arrived here in 1960, seven kids, my mother and father, to make a home in Wawa. Our family has become part of the rich heritage of that particular community. When that is recognized, as it was, for example, at a homecoming during the long weekend in August by those who organized that event, as were so many of the other very important families who made up that community over the years, I felt good. I felt a sense of ownership and I felt I wanted to do something to make that community even better. I think that will be the end result of the approval of this bill today and the work of the member for Hastings-Peterborough.

I think it's also important that we remember where we come from. As so many others more eloquent than I have said over the years, if you don't remember where you come from, there is always the possibility of repeating some of the mistakes we have made. I don't think that is in our best interests.

I was educated here this morning. I listened to the presentations by previous speakers, and they taught me a little about why it is that the United Empire Loyalists came to this country originally and the struggle they went through. I think it will stimulate others who have come to take a look at their history, and because of that, all of us as a community of people in the end will be better served.

I know from some of the reading I've done some of the challenges the Irish faced when they came to this country. There was a time when in Ontario to be Irish Catholic was not something you wore on your forehead, was not something you presented in trying to get a job in some of the larger industries in places like Toronto. But we've overcome that. As a community of people bigger than that, as a community of people educated and looking towards a future that included more of us in positive ways, we got beyond that. In my own community of Sault Ste Marie, for a long time, to be Italian, to have an Italian name, meant you got in line behind those who had a name that was of British ancestry and you didn't get the good jobs, if you got a job at all. I think it behooves us all to remember that that was our history so we don't repeat it again.

In recognizing a group such as the United Empire Loyalists, with the history they bring with them and the difficulties they overcame and the way they have contributed to the fabric of Ontario, we present to others an opportunity to think about their particular experience. When we put all that together, the rich heritage, remembering where we come from, the struggles we individually and collectively have worked our way through, we become a better country, we become a better province, we become a better community of people, a community of people better able, in a world that gets smaller and smaller, to reach out in more inclusive ways to other peoples, if not by way of our education then by way of our travel and ability to communicate today, and that makes us a better community.

As a matter of fact, Canada, because of its history and because of its openness to other cultures and religions and languages, presents a wonderful opportunity to show the world how people of different histories and traditions can work together in a positive way to build a better future and a better home for our children and our children's children to come and for other people who perhaps are persecuted in other places in the world today.

We don't have to look very far. The issue in the newspapers over the last week or two is the issue of the Gypsies from the Czech Republic. Initially, some may have a very negative and judgemental response to that, but it behooves us for a minute to think back on the response to the arrival of our forefathers to this country or some other jurisdiction in the world where we chose to move to start a new life because where we came from was not supportive of the best that was in us, whether it be our faith, our language or our culture.

**1130**

To remember a group such as the United Empire Loyalists, who have contributed in such a positive way to the building up of what our wonderful province and country is today, I think is to call on all of us who claim Ontario as home to be ever more vigilant as we look around the world today at peoples who are persecuted, who are looking for a place to call home, so that they might build a future for their children in Canada, a country of vast proportion.

I come from Sault Ste Marie. I often drive home and I see the miles and miles and miles of territory that we have, that we own collectively, that is still to be developed in the best interests of ourselves and of the world, so I think it behooves us as we remember to be open to the possibilities that are there for the future.

I will be supporting this bill today, brought forward by the member for Hastings-Peterborough for all of those very important reasons, and I would ask members of the House to listen to others who will present today and to be enlightened, as I have, by the members who have spoken so far so that you might find it perhaps in your wisdom to support it as well.

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity this morning to rise in support of the bill brought forward by my colleague from Hastings-Peterborough, a bill that seeks to recognize the Constitutional Act of June 1791 by making it a recognized holiday in the province of Ontario.

In so doing, we're recognizing a very important milestone in the history, not only of this province but of this entire country and our society. It's important in a number of respects, and I want to acknowledge the point that was just made by my colleague from Sault Ste Marie, who

noted that the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists into Canada was part of a tradition that lives on.

We must remember that the Loyalists who came to Canada, by very definition, were immigrants to this country. They were newcomers.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** They were refugees.

**Mr Parker:** They were refugees; they were war refugees; they were DPs. They were people who were forced to leave their homelands to come to a new land. More than that, they were pioneers. It's often forgotten that at the time of the War of Independence, the United States was a mature, well-developed nation. It had a history that was already about 200 years old. These were not people who were leaving one log cabin to move to another log cabin; these were people who were leaving established societies, friends, homes, jobs to come to a brand-new land where they had to carve a living out of the wilderness.

Loyalists after the War of Independence moved in many directions. Some moved to the West Indies. Some moved to the eastern townships of what is now the province of Quebec. Governor Haldimand, who was the Governor of the colony of Quebec at that time, was responsible for placing the Loyalists in various settlements. Remember that what we now call Quebec and Ontario at that time bore the name alternately Canada or Quebec. He was responsible for the entire province of Quebec, which included present-day Ontario, and he directed the settlement of the United Empire Loyalists into essentially four identifiable areas.

Apart from the eastern townships, within what is now Ontario the Loyalists were settled in the areas of the upper St Lawrence, the Quinte area, the Niagara peninsula and the Grand River, and the Loyalist traditions in those areas live on and, as has been pointed out, the names, the traditions, the history that began in those days is still visible in the names and in the communities in those areas.

I want to take this opportunity in the time available to me to comment at some brief length on the subject of one group of Loyalists who arrived in present-day Ontario at that time and to focus on their highly exceptional, colourful and outstanding leader, Joseph Brant. I am speaking, of course, of the Mohawks.

Joseph Brant was a Mohawk, born in Ohio, moved in the highest circles. He was not in the wilderness. He was a great political and social leader of his day, highly educated, world travelled. He had lived in London for a period of time, was received by King George III, included among his friends James Boswell, one of the leading figures of all of history not just of that time. This was the world Joseph Brant knew and lived in.

Joseph Brant came back to his homeland in New York state and was a major influence in leading the Iroquois Nation in support of the crown in resistance to the revolutionaries who were seeking independence in the War of Independence. He united the Mohawks with many of the Seneca and others of the Six Nations.

Remember, the Six Nations at that time were not a fully unified group. They found their loyalties pulled in different directions. There were some leaders who took some of the Iroquois people into an alliance with the American revolutionaries. Joseph Brant was a leading figure in bringing many of the Iroquois people into alliance and loyalty with the British crown. He fought bravely and his troops fought very effectively on behalf of the crown in the War of Independence, and many victories in that war on behalf of the Loyalist forces were attributed to the contribution made by Joseph Brant and by the soldiers under his command.

There's a bit of a romantic myth that the Six Nations reserve on the Grand River today was granted to Joseph Brant and the Mohawks as an act of generosity and spontaneous gratitude by the crown, out of gratitude for the good work the Mohawks had delivered to the crown during the war and for the effectiveness of Joseph Brant's leadership. That is not untrue, but I think it's important we notice that it was also the result of some good, solid hard bargaining by Joseph Brant.

In the treaty that ended the War of Independence, there were various compensations that were arrived at and established at the treaty table between the newly established United States of America and the British government. One of the groups that was forgotten at that table, quite frankly, was Joseph Brant and the Mohawks. Joseph Brant wasn't about to put up with that. Joseph Brant went to Governor Haldimand at the time, who was the Governor of the colony of Canada, the colony of Quebec, and he demanded on behalf of his people that the British crown grant him compensation for what they had lost in what became the state of New York.

The literature isn't altogether clear on why the Grand River site was chosen. Remember, there was also John Deserontyon, another Mohawk leader, a leader of a slightly smaller group, the Upper Mohawks, who was granted a settlement in what is now called Deseronto. The literature would suggest that there was some thought of putting the Upper Mohawks, the Joseph Brant Mohawks, in the same area with Deserontyon. It's suggested that maybe Joseph Brant didn't want to be associated with that group and wanted an independent group. It's also suggested that Haldimand wanted to keep them separate, recognizing what a strong force they would be if the two groups were assembled together.

**1140**

In the end, Haldimand and Brant arrived at an agreement and the Haldimand proclamation of 1784 was granted. I'll just read that to you now:

"Whereas His Majesty having been pleased to direct that in consideration of the early attachment to his cause manifested by the Mohawk Indians, and of the loss of their settlement they thereby sustained...I do hereby in His Majesty's name authorize and permit the said Mohawk Nation, and such other of the Six Nation Indians as wish to settle in that quarter to take possession of and settle upon the banks of the river commonly called Ours or Grand River, running into Lake Erie, allotting to them for that purpose six miles deep from each side of the river beginning at Lake Erie, and extending in that proportion to

the head of the said river, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever."

There's much more I can speak on the subject. I look forward to another opportunity to add on the subject. I see my time is now up and I'm glad to release my time to others.

**Mr Wildman:** I rise to support the passage of this bill brought forward by the member for Hastings-Peterborough. It's given us an opportunity that we don't have very often in this assembly to reflect on the history of this province and the importance of various groups in the development of this province.

I personally have been thinking about my own family's background. I'm a sixth generation Canadian. My family's roots were on both sides of the Ottawa River in the Ottawa Valley, around Shawville, Quebec, and Renfrew county, Carleton county and Lanark county on this side of the river. I'm proud to say that my own heritage is English, Scots, Irish, Mohawk, and many of the ancestors I have were United Empire Loyalists.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to think about this and to reflect on that in listening to some of my colleagues because this is one of the many waves of refugees that we in North America are descended from. The initial waves of refugees to the shores of North America from Europe often were trying to escape religious persecution. Some were trying to escape economic deprivation. Many of the Scots and Irish obviously came to North America subsequently when their lands were confiscated by the nobles, who were enclosing the lands to raise sheep and thereby displaced people. These refugees, United Empire Loyalists, were trying to escape political and economic persecution related to the fact that they remained loyal to the crown, in opposition to the revolutionaries who were arguing that they should not have to pay taxes without representation. They argued that they were not properly represented.

I find it somewhat ironic, and my friend from Hastings-Peterborough might agree that it is somewhat ironic, that a revolutionary government of which he is a member is bringing forward this resolution celebrating those who opposed revolution; or the government that is amalgamating school boards in the province today and thus in many parts of the north, where we will have enormous geographic areas, depriving people of representation on those boards that will be taxing them; that we are here celebrating that this morning.

I appreciated the comments of the member for York East about Joseph Brant and the Mohawks, the Iroquois Nation, the Six Nations, who supported the British and were allies of the British. I think it's important for us to recognize that in giving them their lands, in some cases the British were depriving the Ojibway Nation of lands. The Mohawks were immigrants to Canada in that sense. They had a history, of course, of war on the Huron, who were allies of the French previously. As allies first of the Dutch and then of the British, they had made incursions into what was Ontario and Quebec previously.

I think it's important for us, who are mostly of European descent, to recognize that the aboriginal nations of Canada were not conquered people. They were never conquered, either by the French or the English. They were in fact allies who had signed treaties with the crown. They were allies of the King. They saw themselves, and they were, in persons like Joseph Brant, equals who were supporting the crown because it was in their interests, they believed, to maintain the relationship they had developed with the crown.

When I hear some members — and I have heard some members — say, "Why do the aboriginal people think these treaties are so important? why do they think the rights that were recognized in those treaties should be preserved?" they forget that those treaties were not signed between a conqueror and a defeated nation, but between two nations that decided to cooperate with each other in both of their interests against a common enemy.

We owe a debt to those people. That was again demonstrated in the War of 1812. We have welcomed refugees and the aboriginal people have welcomed refugees, wave after wave after wave, in Canada. We should be celebrating that past, and for that reason I support this bill.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** I join in complimenting my colleague the member for Hastings-Peterborough for bringing forward this quite appropriate bill for consideration by the House, acknowledging the contribution of United Empire Loyalists to Ontario, the old Upper Canada, and to Canada's heritage. This is a very important group of mixed background, which has been noted. Many people view the United Empire Loyalists as British Tories and limit their view of the group to that group, but as my colleagues have pointed out, there were pacifists, Germans, French Protestants, German Calvinists, German Lutherans, Catholic Highlanders, Scottish Presbyterians and First Canadians also as part of that group, which is a more accurate description of that part of Ontario history, the history of Upper Canada.

I support the bill, of course, because I believe, as other members do, in the importance of recognizing, first of all, that we are all Canadians, but second, that we have a rich and diverse heritage not only in Canada but also in the early history of Upper Canada.

My own family emigrated from Ireland in the 1830s to St John, New Brunswick. My wife's family, on the other hand, is a United Empire Loyalist family from the Brockville area of Ontario in the county of Leeds. Those are the Elliott and Phillips families, many of whom still reside along the shores of the St Lawrence in central and eastern Ontario. The diligence and dedication of the United Empire Loyalists is clear when one looks at the architecture of eastern Ontario and the vitality of the communities of eastern Ontario, particularly along the St Lawrence.

I also want to comment briefly on the contribution of the United Empire Loyalists, among others, but in particular the United Empire Loyalists, to the development of our parliamentary tradition in Upper Canada; our system of land registration, which has been crucially important to

the economic development and success of what is present-day Ontario; and also our system of justice, incorporating the Equity Courts, the Chancery Courts of the United Kingdom and also the great tradition of British common law. Two of our most important and seminal statutes came from that time, namely, the Quebec Act of 1774, followed by the Constitutional Act of 1791 establishing this elected assembly.

I join with my colleagues in support of this bill and I compliment the member for Hastings-Peterborough for bringing it forward.

**1150**

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I'm very pleased to stand in support of my comrade and friend the member for Hastings-Peterborough on this excellent idea through private members' bills today.

They say everybody is Irish on St Patrick's Day, so why not give everybody a chance to be an Empire Loyalist on Empire Loyalist Day on June 19 from here on in?

Although I cannot make a claim to Loyalist ancestry myself, I fully support this bill which recognizes a special place in Ontario's history that these immigrants represent in the social and economic development of our young colony.

The Niagara area, which is home for me, born and raised in Niagara, is also particularly rich in Loyalist tradition, thanks to Colonel John Butler and his Rangers and many of his Mohawk and Seneca allies under the great Joseph Brant, whom we've heard mentioned many times today. This band of about 1,200 Loyalists fought valiantly out of their base in Fort Niagara in present-day Lewiston, New York, against the forces of republicanism and rebellion in the States.

After the American Revolution, Butler and his allies crossed the Niagara River and settled in many communities throughout the peninsula. They were joined by hundreds of Loyalists of all descents, especially from the New York and Pennsylvania areas.

Reading through the history, you see that life was not easy at all for the early Loyalist immigrants. Some spent years in temporary quarters before moving on to build homes and farms in the wilderness. The year 1789 was known as the hungry year, as the previous year's crops were ruined by extreme heat. Overhunting had depleted game in Niagara's forests, yet the Loyalists survived, and at this time eight townships had been established in the northern part of the Niagara Peninsula.

Newark, now known as Niagara-on-the-Lake, became one of the young colony's first metropolises. The history of this very House in fact dates back to Newark, the first seat of government in Upper Canada. Had Newark not been so close to the border, facing the constant threat of American invasion in those days, it may have been the city that Toronto is today and we'd be cheering for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Maple Leafs instead of a Toronto team.

Shortly thereafter, many more townships were settled throughout Niagara, including those communities like Port Colborne, Fort Erie, and Wainfleet in my riding of Niagara South, with a great number of Pennsylvania Quaker and Mennonite families in that area.

These Loyalists went on to achieve many great things shortly thereafter. They defended the vulnerable Niagara Frontier in the War of 1812 against daunting odds. William Hamilton Merritt, one Loyalist descendant who fought the American invaders, later went on to build the Welland Canal as well as various railroads and bridges throughout the Niagara Peninsula and Upper Canada.

About 40,000 Niagarans today can trace their roots back to Loyalist beginnings. Surnames well known in Niagara like Brown, Sherk, Overholt, Huffman, Wintemute, Winger and, yes, even Harris, are commonly recognized Loyalist monikers in our part of the province.

The Loyalists were instrumental in building Niagara and in building Ontario's cultural, legal and constitutional institutions. I commend the member for Hastings-Peterborough for his efforts in promoting the province's history and the heritage of its people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Danford, you have two more minutes.

**Mr Danford:** First of all, I want to thank my colleagues for their support this morning that's been shown in this House, certainly the members for Durham Centre, Niagara South, York East and also the members for Algoma-Manitoulin, Sault Ste Marie and Algoma. Their comments were well received and we appreciate that sort of support that recognizes the importance of this bill to the history of the province of Ontario.

As citizens, we are all constantly striving to improve our future, but we always need to remember our roots and our past because truly the lessons of the past are an asset for the decisions of the future, and we always have to keep that in mind.

The Loyalist movement and those people who migrated to this part of Canada set the example for us. Their hard work, their pride, their dedication and the strong principles they brought with them, through very difficult times which many of the members here have already related to and mentioned, set the basis for the province we have here today. Certainly, all the generations that followed, and I think that includes everyone present in this House today and whoever happens to be watching, have been the benefactors of those things that were brought here and how we were established.

The member for Algoma-Manitoulin in one of his remarks recognized the time that has passed, over 200 years, and the fact that we have not recognized this important occasion, and I agree. I thank the member for bringing that point forth and I think it is time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Because the standing orders require that votes on private members' public business not be taken before 12 noon, I will suspend the proceedings until noon, pursuant to standing order 95(e), at which time I will put the questions on the ballot items debated this morning.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for fran-**

**cophone affairs):** Mr Speaker, may I request unanimous consent that we proceed with the vote now?

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is one of the few occasions where I cannot accept unanimous consent because not all the members are here, and for me to call them I would have to ring the bell and have unanimous consent. The House will recess for four minutes.

*The House recessed from 1156 to 1200.*

## ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We'll deal first with ballot item 91. Mr Ford has moved private member's notice of motion number 65. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Take your seats.

## UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS' DAY ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 SUR LE JOUR DES LOYALISTES DE L'EMPIRE-UNI

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We will now deal with ballot item number 92.

Mr Danford has moved second reading of Bill 150, An Act proclaiming United Empire Loyalists' Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96(k), the bill is referred to the committee of the whole House.

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** Could I make a request, Mr Speaker? I would like this referred to the Legislative Assembly committee if the House chooses.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour? Carried.

Call in the members; there will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1202 to 1206.*

## ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Ford has moved private member's notice of motion number 65. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

**Ayes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Arnott, Ted | Hastings, John | Ouellette, Jerry J. |
| Beaubien, Marcel | Hodgson, Chris | Parker, John L. |
| Boushy, Dave | Hudak, Tim | Pettit, Trevor |
| Brown, Michael A. | Jordan, W. Leo | Phillips, Gerry |
| Churley, Marilyn | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Shea, Derwyn |
| Danford, Harry | Laughren, Floyd | Sheehan, Frank |
| Flaherty, Jim | Leadston, Gary L. | Spina, Joseph |
| Fox, Gary | Martin, Tony | Stewart, R. Gary |
| Froese, Tom | Maves, Bart | Tsubouchi, David H. |
| Galt, Doug | Miclash, Frank | Turnbull, David |
| Gilchrist, Steve | Newman, Dan | Vankoughnet, Bill |
| Grimmett, Bill | O'Toole, John | Villeneuve, Noble |
| Guzzo, Garry J. | | |

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 37; the nays are zero.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Before we adjourn, I would like to congratulate the ladies and gentlemen who took the time to dress in those beautiful costumes and spend the time here with us this morning. Thank you very much.

All matters related to private members' business having been debated, I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1209 to 1330.*

# MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** On behalf of Mr McGuinty and my colleagues in our caucus, I rise today to congratulate Canadians of Ukrainian descent on celebrating their independence day.

The courageous determination of Ukrainians to regain their freedom is a source of inspiration to all mankind. Having tasted liberty in 1918, neither the weapons of starvation nor prison walls could extinguish the torch of freedom and hope that has been resolutely passed on from one heroic generation to another.

I'm convinced the rich heritage and proud tradition of Ukrainians will endure forever. Those Ukrainians who have come to Canada in search of freedom and opportunity since 1891 have made important contributions to the development of our province and country and to the enrichment of our culture. With the ethic of hard work and study, they have taken their rightful role as leaders in the professions, business, education, sport and government. We admire the unbreakable spirit of optimism and hope of our Ukrainian friends. In spite of past tragic events, they've become symbols to all freedom-loving peoples as torch bearers of democracy, torch bearers of people who justly want only to determine their own future and structure their own destiny.

To President Kuchma and Consul General in Toronto, and indeed to all Canadians of Ukrainian descent, we want to congratulate them on their independence day.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Over the last number of days, members have been expressing on behalf of their constituents, as I did yesterday, their consternation over the significant increase in the price of gasoline over the last number of days.

Yesterday my colleague from Sault Ste Marie suggested that the provincial government press upon the federal government their responsibility to investigate these increases in gasoline prices and to take measures against

them. I pointed out that this government had reimposed the vehicle registration fee for northern Ontario drivers at a time when gasoline prices are much higher than when the previous government removed that fee as a way of trying to compensate for the additional cost in northern Ontario.

I note that the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations is today making a statement in which he says he is calling upon the federal minister to take action. He says, "To date, the federal government continues to demonstrate a lack of interest in taking action that will protect Ontario and Canadian consumers against undesirable market practices being conducted by petroleum companies related to gasoline pricing." I would say that as long as this government maintains the vehicle registration fee in northern Ontario, they are demonstrating the same lack of interest for consumers in northern Ontario.

## ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I was proud to attend the launch yesterday of an education and fund-raising campaign cosponsored by the Ontario Brain Injury Association, Bauer Canada and minor hockey.

The event was initiated at the urging of Carl Lindros, father to Eric and Brett Lindros, both stars of the National Hockey League. As many in the House know, young Brett was forced to announce his retirement from the National Hockey League in May 1996 at the young age of 20 because he had suffered a number of concussions and did not allow his brain time to recover between injuries.

Bauer Canada commissioned artist John Newby to produce a limited-edition print to be used as a fund-raiser for OBIA and minor hockey; 888 signed prints are available for purchase by minor hockey associations. The funds raised will allow the Ontario Brain Injury Association to educate minor hockey league coaches and parents about the dangers of receiving a concussion and the importance of allowing the brain to recover before returning to play. The education program will also focus on the necessity of wearing properly fitted equipment. For those interested in purchasing a print, please contact Larry Nelles at 905-641-8877.

Our government has committed to providing those with brain injuries services close to home here in Ontario. Brain injury is the leading cause of death for Canadian males under 40 and the fourth leading cause of death young females. As Dr Barry Willer, the executive director for OBIA, stated yesterday, the only cure is prevention.

I would like to congratulate all those involved in this very important cause.

## JEUX DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

## WORLD FRANCOPHONE GAMES

**M. Patten (Ottawa-Centre):** J'aimerais informer les membres de l'Assemblée que Ottawa-Hull a été choisie pour être hôte de la communauté francophone du monde et le site des Jeux de la francophonie de l'an 2001.

Avec le solide soutien du gouvernement fédéral et des gouvernements municipaux de la région et le travail dévoué des organisateurs et bénévoles de la région, Ottawa-Hull a été capable de remporter cette compétition contre Beyrouth, qui était fort bien organisée et qui avait l'appui de la France. Cet événement international d'importance comporte des compétitions athlétiques, et culturelles aussi.

These World Francophone Games are expected to attract 3,500 athletes and artisans to the region. Ottawa-Hull will be centre stage to the world during this time. The World Francophone Games will take advantage of the region's many venues, such as the Terry Fox Sports Facility, Lansdowne Park, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Gallery, with the games likely to be headquartered at the University of Ottawa.

Increased tourism and activities related to organizing and marketing the games will generate between $20 million and $30 million for the local economy. More important than the financial reward is the cooperation between Ottawa and Hull, which worked together to secure these games. It's a fine example of Canadian unity at work.

I'm confident that Ottawa-Hull will host an event that will be the envy of the world, and I want to congratulate all my fellow people in the region who have made this possible.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS CENTRE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Today I'm going to tell the House about my correspondence with Kim Charlebois, who is the coordinator of the sexual assault centre for Quinte and district.

The House might like to know that this centre is the only sexual assault centre in the province of Ontario not funded by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. They have been trying to get funding for some time. Under our government they were given a grant of, I think, approximately $50,000 a year for project money. Even that has now been cancelled by the present government, so they're not getting one dime either for annualized funding or for project funding — nothing.

I want to point out to the government that this is unfair. For a government that says it cares about violence-against-women issues, this is another indication that it doesn't.

I want to point out to you what this centre does. They operate a 24-hour sexual assault crisis line that receives no funding; it is operated completely by trained volunteers. They receive approximately 1,600 calls per year on the line. They accompany police to court. They work with male and female survivors, and there's been about a 500% increase in calls from men over the past two years. So this is a very important sexual assault centre. I urge the Solicitor General to get on with it and fund this centre.

## UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** Not only do Ukrainian Canadians celebrate a free Ukraine, but as part of that celebration on Saturday, August 23, I was privileged to participate in the first annual Ukrainian festival and parade that was held in my riding of High Park-Swansea.

The parade was sponsored by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and marked the sixth anniversary of Ukrainian independence from the Soviet Union after 60 years of Communist rule. The parade, which started at High Park, wound along Bloor Street until it reached Jane Street. Over 6,000 people viewed the parade at various points along its route.

The parade was led by the Governor General's Horse Guards, and some of the participants included the Baturyn Marching Band, the Ukrainian Youth Association, Toronto City War Vets, the Bloor West Village BIA, Future Bakery, the Ukrainian Canadian School Band, Coffee Time, Ukrainian Sports Club, (Contact) Kontakt, the Ukrainian TV program, as well as Plast Youth Camp and the Derma Dance Co, and of course yours truly.

At the conclusion of the parade, a festival was held at the corner of Bloor and Jane streets. There were Ukrainian crafts along with bands, dancers and singers who were on hand to entertain the crowds that spent the day in Bloor West Village. As well, many of the local merchants were serving many of the fine traditional Ukrainian foods.

The Ukrainian community has a strong tradition in West Toronto, and I must say it was a pleasure to see so many members out and about and welcome them back into our community.

**1340**

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** We have seen the cool reception reserved to Premier Mike Harris and Municipal Affairs Minister Al Leach at the AMO convention. I know that most of the elected officials from my riding are very sceptical about the downloading of services and about the fact that the Harris government insists it will be revenue-neutral, that municipalities will not only be able to reduce taxes but will also be able to offer better services. This is nonsense.

I have prepared a chart with all the municipal responsibilities for Prescott and Russell and I came up with a shortfall of $20 million. Some Tories might say this is typical of opposition, but the united counties of Prescott and Russell did their own study, and they also came up with a shortfall of more than $20 million.

It is false to say these services will be downloaded on to municipalities without reduction of service quality and without tax increases. It is more and more obvious that the Harris government wants to put the blame on municipal politicians for these service reductions and tax increases, but as we have seen this week at the AMO convention, municipal leaders are well aware of that strategy and they will not let this happen without a fight.

## BLOOD SYSTEM

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Over 12,000 Canadians have been infected with hepatitis C through the blood system, and despite ongoing efforts to persuade ministers of health at the federal and provincial levels of the need for compensation, no action has yet been taken.

A Tory letter to haemophilia Ontario, dated February 25, 1997, stated:

"Health ministers across Canada decided...that they would not extend a compensation package for those individuals who contracted the hepatitis C virus from tainted blood. The reason was that there was a major difficulty in compensating all individuals who were infected by a medical mishap."

As the testimony at the Krever commission clearly showed, tainted blood resulted not from a mishap but from decisions made by various agencies, corporations and levels of government over a number of years not to use available tests to screen out infected blood.

The Minister of Health, in opposition, urged our government to compensate haemophiliacs who were infected by tainted blood. Today I ask the minister to have the integrity and courage with respect to hepatitis C infected haemophiliacs, first, to insist that the compensation issue be at the table at the next ministers' meeting; second, to strongly advocate for compensation; and third, to commit to using provincial dollars to compensate victims of tainted blood if no federal-provincial agreement is reached. These people are dying. The time to act is now.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** We all have a responsibility to seek the end of the problem of violence against women, which seriously affects the lives of thousands of women and children, including many in my riding of Chatham-Kent.

Violence against women is a crime which subjects its victims to numerous abuses, both mental and physical. Suffering injury and disrupted lives, these victims must live with the intimidation, painful images and deep scars of the abuse they have experienced. Violence against women is a very real part of our communities, and whether we recognize it or not, it touches all our lives.

In response to this persistent problem, the minister responsible for women's issues, the Honourable Dianne Cunningham, recently announced a strategic framework for the prevention of violence against women.

This program addresses such violence as it permeates our society in all its forms, in the home, in the workplace, in institutional settings and in the broader community. The program strategies include providing protective havens for abused women and focusing on the support of victims, while at the same time taking aggressive action against perpetrators through improvements to the justice system.

I am optimistic and highly supportive of this new program and the protection, support and hope it provides for victimized women and their families.

Violence against women is a crime which can be prevented through government support, tough laws, education and, most importantly, community care.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg leave to inform the House that yesterday the Clerk received the 42nd report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 105(g)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

# INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## LANSING CO-OPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL ACT, 1997

Mr Turnbull moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr88, An act respecting Lansing Co-operative Nursery School.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

# STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** This government is committed to protecting the environment and ensuring that the people of Ontario have a safe drinking water supply.

As my colleagues are aware, the Who Does What exercise clarified the responsibilities of provincial and municipal levels of government in the delivery of water and sewage services.

Municipalities have always been responsible for providing water and sewage treatment services to their communities, and three quarters of the operations providing these services already own their own facilities in their own names. In recognition of this, the government will be transferring the title, which those municipalities are beneficial owners of anyway, of the remaining one quarter sewage plants to these municipalities.

The province recognizes that we have the very important responsibility of setting proper standards and ensuring that they are met. We also recognize that there will be special cases where municipalities will need help.

That is why today I'm pleased to share with the House the details of the provincial water protection fund announced by my colleague the finance minister in the May 6 budget. We are making $200 million available over three years to help municipalities in the event of specific health and environmental problems. Funds will be available to those communities that require financial assistance to solve specific environmental and public health problems. With this new fund, we are making sure that cost-effective solutions to problems are found and that we make the best possible use of existing facilities and joint servicing arrangements.

We have very high water and sewage standards in this province. Virtually all of Ontario's municipalities currently meet the province's drinking water standards. Our infrastructure is among the best in the world. The funding I have announced today will help ensure that water and sewage treatment facilities in Ontario maintain those high standards.

The provincial water protection fund is further evidence that this government is committed to protecting the environment and ensuring that all Ontarians are able to drink safe, clean water.

**1350**

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** Today I am tabling a resolution in the House in connection with gasoline pricing practices by large petroleum companies. I hope to receive all-party support in order that I may be able to present a unanimous expression of the Ontario Legislature at the provincial consumer ministers' meeting in Regina on September 10 and 11.

I've previously expressed my concern, and anger, quite frankly, as have most Ontarians, as have my colleagues across the House, as have ordinary Ontarians, people like my uncle and aunt, John and Kathy Takahashi, who happen to be in the gallery today — I slipped that one in. Ontarians are angry at the outrageous price increases that the big petroleum companies are foisting today upon the consumers of Ontario.

The issue of ensuring fair competition in the gasoline marketplace is an issue that crosses provincial boundaries and is the responsibility of the federal government under the Competition Act. However, to date, and as recently as yesterday, the federal government continues to show a demonstrated lack of interest in taking action that will protect Ontarians and in fact all Canadians against the undesirable market practices being conducted by the petroleum companies relating to gasoline pricing.

Notwithstanding the reluctance of the federal government to assume its rightful responsibility for the issue, I have already written to Ontario's gas refiners demanding that steps be taken to resolve this issue.

I've also met with the Independent Retail Gasoline Marketers Association and other independent gasoline retailers, along with the member for Halton North, to discuss issues such as retail margins. As well, I've written to the Honourable John Manley, the federal minister responsible, to express my concern and to call upon Ottawa to exercise the powers under the Competition Act to

eliminate anti-competitive practices in the retail gasoline marketplace across this nation.

Today I'm calling on Mr Manley and the federal government to immediately address the pricing increases and practices within the gasoline industry and to appoint a special investigator to review this situation and to make recommendations to ensure that Canadian consumers benefit from competitive gasoline pricing.

I am seeking expressions of support from both opposition parties today and all members of the House for the resolution. This will enable me to have the full backing of the Ontario Legislature in presenting Ontario's position to the federal-provincial ministers' meeting in Regina. I look forward to the support of the House for this action.

## WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** For a brief moment earlier today, before I heard the statement, I would have thought that this government and this minister finally had the courage and the commitment to call an inquiry into the Hamilton Plastimet fire. But what we have seen is simply another public relations announcement by a desperate minister, by a minister who is on the ropes, by a minister who has abandoned all commitment to the environment. Instead of receiving an announcement that the people of Hamilton have been waiting for, what we have is a recycled announcement of a May 6 budget announcement made by the finance minister.

What I find most disturbing about this is the first line: "This government is committed to protecting the environment." This is the same government that has cut one third of the funding out of the Ministry of Environment. This is the same government that has cut 40% of the budget out of the Ministry of Environment. This is the same government that has allowed prosecutions and charges to drop by 50% in the last two years because they have turned a blind eye to polluters across Ontario.

What we see today is a lack of recognition that what this government has done, with the bill that the minister refers to today, is open the door for the privatization of water and sewer services. When this government turned over the remaining 25% of the services to the municipalities, both opposition parties and every single group that came in front of the committee said to the government, "Put a clause in your legislation that stops municipalities from privatizing water and sewers."

What did this government do? It ignored it. It listened to its corporate friends. They can't wait till they get their greedy paws on water and sewer services and then have the ability to set water rates and hold consumers hostage. This is what it's all about.

This announcement does absolutely nothing to protect consumers from giving the private sector the authority to set water and sewer rates. Water and sewer rates do not belong in the hands of the private sector; they belong in the hands of government. The bill that you have set has opened that door. The bill that you put through the Legislature simply turns it over; any municipality across Ontario today can turn over, not the operation — the operation is one part of the agenda. The operation of the services in some municipalities makes sense. It is the ability to set water rates. Today there isn't one municipality in Ontario that has turned that over. With this bill and with the downloading you have opened the door. You're going to see the British experience repeated here in Ontario as soon as you allow the private sector to control water and sewer rates. You have done nothing to protect that, and consumers are not going to forget what you have done to them.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** We see the Harris government springing into action today on gas prices. It was a year ago May when we raised it, and of course the Minister of Economic Development said: "No, no, don't worry. Prices are about the same here as they are in France and Switzerland. What are you all worried about? Furthermore, we must let the market have its way." Mr Tsubouchi, your problem's not with the opposition; it's persuading your cabinet colleagues that there's a problem. We care about the price here in Ontario, not France or Switzerland, where he may travel, but here in Ontario.

We see some tough action by the government. They're going to pass a resolution and they're going to write a letter. You want action? You get Mike Harris right in behind it. He'll write letters and pass resolutions.

I would say to the government, first talk to the minister, Mr Saunderson. Tell him it is a problem. Tell him that the marketplace isn't working. That's your first problem. Second, do something. We can pass, here in this Legislature, legislation around what's called predatory pricing. We asked you to do that a year ago, we asked you to do that last week, and we're asking you to do that again. What's happening is that the large oil companies are putting the small independent operators out of business, and we can do something about that. But no, we're going to send a resolution down to Ottawa, pass the buck.

I would say to the minister and to Mike Harris, let's get a little backbone. Spend some time writing some legislation here that we can deal with, bring it before the Legislature and let us deal with it. Second, call Mr Saunderson in and tell him he's offside, he's wrong.

The government has now changed its tack because they realize the public are sick and tired of the lack of action by this government.

## WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a response to the Minister of Environment and Energy. I also thought the minister might be announcing today that he's calling for an independent investigation into the fire in Hamilton. But no. What did we see last night on TV but Mr Hardy Wong, the regional director, trying to explain what happened in Hamilton. Where's the minister? He's afraid to

speak out on this issue. He's removed himself, ducking the issue completely.

Today what do we hear? We've got the minister up playing the old shell game. He's reannouncing an announcement that was made a little while ago. It must be because AMO is in town and they're upset about the fact that they have to pay for all this somehow. This was announced a while ago. There's nothing new here today. What's shameful about it is that the minister has already cut millions and millions of dollars out of various programs and today is reannouncing a little bit, a small portion of that, back into the system.

They cut the municipal assistance program, the CURB program; that's the agricultural runoff program. Under OCWA they cut the grants and cut all the water conservation programs. Staff and resources have been cut to the bone. What's worst of all is that this minister has opened the door to have our precious resource, water in this province, privatized.

The minister should be ashamed of himself today. He's got nothing new to say. We were looking forward to some kind of announcement on either Hydro or the Hamilton fire, the two really big issues out there, and not a word about it. What does he do instead but stand up and reannounce old news, something we already knew.

Minister, what we want to hear from you today is an announcement about the Hamilton fire. We want to see you take responsibility. We want you to look into whether the cuts in staff and resources, as I firmly believe, had an impact and an effect on what happened at that fire. We want an investigation into what happened at that Hamilton fire. Your own studies show — they even exceeded Greenpeace studies on the site. It's a site I was able to walk into because it wasn't constrained. There are a lot of questions that need to be answered. We want to see the minister finally stand up and do his job and take responsibility for the health of the people of this province.

**1400**

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** We on this side are always thankful for any little recognition by this government that their friends and supporters in the private sector are damaging the ability of consumers to buy and to make a living. We will of course be supporting this resolution, given that yesterday we asked the government to do that in response to a statement made by our colleague John Solomon in Ottawa.

But we find it all passing strange. It rings hollow and feels somewhat hypocritical that in dealing with the petroleum industry, the giant that is making record profits these days, this government would choose to use a flyswatter, while in dealing with the workers of the province and the public service and the poor people out there, they're continually using a sledgehammer. We would hope for more than a resolution; we would hope for more than a letter to the federal minister. We hope you do something of some substance. As the member from the Liberal Party said, take the bull by the horns and use the legislation we have at our disposal.

I would ask you in closing, due to the tremendous effect and impact this is having across this province, particularly in northern Ontario, and that you're coming at this at such a late date, that you might consider the suggestion made by my colleague from Algoma yesterday. There's a piece of your budget coming into effect on September 1 that's going to change an initiative that we as government put in place to support northern Ontario and its economy and the workers and consumers out there who have to drive to work every day, who have no alternative but to take their motorcar to drive goods to market and attempt to attract tourism into northern Ontario. We took away the registration fee for motor vehicle registration.

If this minister really means to take action, if he really wants to do something of substance, he would talk to the finance minister and to his Premier and ask him to step in and stop the imposition of this new tax on the people of northern Ontario and give them relief. In Wawa today the cost of a litre of gasoline is 72.9 cents. That's a shame. That's under your watch. That's why you stand back and watch this industry take a sledgehammer to the people of the province.

# ORAL QUESTIONS

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** In the absence of the Solicitor General, I address my question to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** The Solicitor General is expected here in a matter of minutes. There he is; he's right there.

**Mr Ramsay:** I have a question for the Solicitor General today that I'm sure he's expecting. I'd like to ask you about your project Camp Turnaround that I guess is more like Camp Breakout as of last night.

With the zeal you have to privatize your jails, you very quickly signed a $2.4-million contract, a yearly contract, with a private company that now seems unprepared to provide adequate security for dangerous young offenders here in Ontario. The 32-bed facility has been running at less than half-capacity since its opening a month ago. We also find that police were called yesterday before the break-in to quell an assault on a guard and two charges were laid after that fact.

Why didn't you ensure, as with all our government facilities, that the proper backup and procedures were in place before you opened this facility?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** There was a security check done in the facility prior to its opening a number of weeks ago. We are conducting a security check following the events of last evening. I want to assure the

members opposite that we will make every effort to ensure that the best possible security is provided at that site. That's our intent and we will follow through on that.

**Mr Ramsay:** The security systems that were in place failed. That's not good enough. This is more like Camp Getaway for these young offenders. It's my understanding now that ministry guards from Metro West and from Vanier have been dispatched to provide perimeter security at this boot camp, so to me this presents a very interesting picture.

Picture this, Minister: We now have this almost empty, $2.4-million boot camp fully staffed with government guards on the outside protecting the perimeter of this. What we have is the guards guarding the guards right now, and this is costing taxpayers money. How much extra is this security going to cost taxpayers, and what is the real cost of guarding these young offenders today?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Our commitment is to public safety, and there are questions surrounding security at the site following the events of last evening. Until the security review is completed, until we feel confident and ministry officials feel confident, we are going to ensure there are adequate people on the site to not in any way, shape or form jeopardize public safety.

**Mr Ramsay:** Yesterday, before the assault and the breakout, I was speaking to child advocate Judy Finlay about the situation at the boot camp. I was following up on complaints that have been made about the inappropriate transfers of young offenders, being taken away from their schooling and their programming at their regular facilities and being brought to this boot camp to try to fill its beds. She has ordered some of those young offenders to be returned to those facilities because your protocols for transfer were not in place, and yet you went ahead and opened this facility.

This camp sounds more like Camp Run-Amuck, because everything you've tried to do there has failed. Minister, people in the area are afraid for their safety and security, and rightfully so after last night's breakout. With all the problems of this privatized facility, with the extra costs to the taxpayers and the threat to safety, will you give this House a commitment today to shut this facility down?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** It's interesting to see the approach of the member opposite, given September 1989. It's just one example, and I have a litany of examples with respect to this: Monteith, 22 young offenders who were transferred, 13 escaped since September 1989. A hostage-taking of two correctional officers and now —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The reality is that Ontarians want different approaches in terms of dealing with youth crime and young offenders. The two previous governments did nothing, and as a result of that, 80% —

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** This is your baby.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** It's not our boot camp.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I caution the member for Hamilton Centre. Come to order. The member for Sault Ste Marie. The member for Sault Ste Marie, I'm not having a debate with you. Come to order. Thank you. And the leader of the third party.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** That reaction exemplifies the same non-serious approach those two parties took to young offender crime in this province during their tenure in government. The reality was that under their tenure, 80% of the people in our adult correction system in this province were graduates of the youth justice system. Over 60% in our youth justice system were repeat offenders. Ontarians were sick and tired of the Young Offenders Act, of the youth justice system and of those two governments. Their lackadaisical approach to youth crime is one of the major reasons they're sitting on that side of the House today.

**1410**

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Environment. For a month and a half, myself; the member for Hamilton Centre, David Christopherson; community groups; firefighters; public workers; and city council have asked for a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire.

Yesterday your own report, a report issued and commissioned by your ministry, showed some shocking results. It has shown that dioxin levels on the site are 66 times higher than the acceptable standard. It has shown that lead is 59 times higher than the acceptable level. Let me read from your report. It says: "Lead is a toxic metal with various harmful effects particularly on the nervous system and haematological processes. The most sensitive are young children." That's from your own report.

Minister, you, the Minister of Health and the Premier cannot guarantee the safety and health of that community. Will you today have the courage to do what was right three weeks ago and call a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I have said to the member before that I am very concerned about the toxic levels of materials on the site. I have never denied, I have always been open with regard to that. I have had my officials be open with the community. My officials have concentrated their efforts on the community rather than on the site until this point in time, because we are now in the throes of cleaning up this site. We are going to assure the people of Hamilton, once and for all, that this particular site is dealt with so that there will not be a danger to the community in the future.

This site has had, I assume, these toxic levels for a long period of time. They did not occur during this fire; some of them did, but a lot of them occurred before this time. They were there, as I understand it, for a long period of time. We are concerned about it, but our primary focus here is to clean up the site.

**Mr Agostino:** Your premise is wrong, because if you stand here today and acknowledge that you were aware of high levels of lead and dioxin on the site prior to the fire, and if your ministry was aware, then let me suggest to you, Minister, you were negligent in not acting and having that removed before the fire occurred. You can't have it both ways. If you knew about it, you had a responsibility to take care of it, and you failed miserably. I'm not sure what you're afraid of. You can run but you can't hide from this.

The problem is that you have a conflict here. You are afraid, if you admit error, then you will be liable. I have a suggestion for you. Will you, today, appoint the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, an independent body that reports to the Legislature, to carry out a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire, to take it out of the political process, take it out of any other jurisdiction — it's going to be expensive — but simply appoint an office that reports to this Legislature? Will you today agree to appoint the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario to call an inquiry into the Hamilton fire?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** That is not her function. We are providing all the information to all the parties who are asking questions.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** You tell us how it happened.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I say to all members from Hamilton, ask me the questions. We will answer those questions. I believe an inquiry is necessary when answers are not forthcoming. We will answer the questions. We have been open. We want the public of Hamilton, whom we care about, to know the facts. That's why we have an information trailer there. That's why I have my officials down there — the scientists, the technologists — telling the people the facts, not politicians raving about what might or might not be the case. We are not fearmongering; we are providing the people with the facts.

**Mr Agostino:** Let me suggest to the minister that what you are doing is absolutely nothing. Nobody believes you, nobody trusts you and nobody trusts the work that has come out of your office with regard to this. It is not the front-line staff in Hamilton. They do a good job, but you have taken away their tools to do the job. I'm not sure what else you need. We want to know how it happened, why the fire occurred, why the evacuation order wasn't given earlier, why it took two weeks for your ministry to order that the site be secured. There are those and hundreds of other questions.

You cannot stand in your place today and guarantee to the firefighters, to the residents of Hamilton, to the people affected that there will not be any serious or long-term health effects. You can't stand there and do that, so short of guaranteeing that to the people of Hamilton, I believe you have a responsibility to address what went wrong, to address the adequacy of your response, to address the reliability of the information you gave that decisions were made on, to address the fact that it took so long for action on securing the site. There are many, many questions you haven't answered. You said you were going to do an internal investigation. We have seen nothing yet.

Again, will you today, as minister, direct the Legislature and give the Legislature the authority to go ahead and ask the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario to call a public inquiry?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I think the member is clear about the Environmental Bill of Rights and what the function of the Environmental Commissioner is. He can operate within the confines of that act, as any other citizen can.

I must say that earlier this week when Greenpeace released their results with regard to this site, which I acknowledged were probably accurate, that there were concerns about the toxic levels on this site — it depends on the location of those particular samples — it was quite astounding to find out that a resident whom they had brought forward to speak against the ministry about not providing information actually turned around, went off script and said she was satisfied. Ann Gallagher, who lives right near the site, said she was satisfied with the ministry and how open they were and how much information they were providing.

**Mr Agostino:** Why don't you go down yourself and talk to them?

**Mr Christopherson:** You meet with Ann Gallagher.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I want to warn the members for Hamilton East and Hamilton Centre to come to order. I'm not warning you again.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I am concerned over the health of these individuals. As some of the journalists are saying in the Spectator, Mr Agostino, the member, should not be playing politics with the people of Hamilton.

**1420**

## ONTARIO HYDRO

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question for the Minister of Environment, and I would say to him that he should be doing something to protect the public in terms of the Hamilton fire.

But my question is about Hydro. Minister, we learned today that the shutdown and overhaul cost of Hydro's nuclear plants has gone up by $1.5 billion in two weeks. This has to be some sort of world record for cost escalation in two weeks. Unfortunately, it's typical of your government. You change the numbers on municipal downloading week by week; you change the numbers on hospital closings city by city depending on where you're at. We're tempted to ask, does anybody over there know what you're doing? Does anybody keep track of the important details and the impacts on people?

In this case, Minister, what happened? How did your Mr Farlinger, your Hydro chairman, allow the costs to escalate by $1.5 billion in two weeks?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** This is a plan which is being put forward by Ontario Hydro. The government has asked Ontario Hydro to justify the figures they are presenting. I suspect that they will be able to justify those at some time.

As the member knows, we have said that a legislative committee will have the opportunity to look at the safety report, which causes me great concern, as well as at the strategic plan, to ask those very questions. We are asking them of Ontario Hydro and we expect the Ontario Legislature's members will also ask those questions.

**Mr Hampton:** We'll address your issue with the parliamentary committee in a minute.

You stood in this House two weeks ago and you tried to say to all of the people across Ontario that your Mr Farlinger was absolutely in charge at Hydro, had all of the answers at Hydro, and you said that this will be the cost. Now, two weeks later, it comes out and it's $1.5 billion more — $1.5 billion in two weeks.

You also said something else two weeks ago that I think is totally lacking in credibility. It shows that you don't have your numbers right. You said that this is not going to impact on people's electrical rates across the province.

Let me ask you again: With this further $1.5 billion, this small detail that you missed, the further $1.5 billion in costs, are you still saying that people's hydro and electricity rates won't be affected?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I believe the difference relates to a different set of assumptions in terms of making the calculations. But having said that, I believe my statement two weeks ago and my position since the strategic plan has been put forward is that Ontario Hydro assured us, the government, that rates would not increase as a result of their strategic plan, their strategic recovery plan to ensure the safety of the nuclear reactors. That is what I have said. Mr Farlinger and Ontario Hydro will be showing this government how in fact that will take place. That's what his position is and that's what we accepted: the conditions of the strategic plan, the basis of it.

**Mr Hampton:** This is interesting. Week one, you make assumption A. Week 3, you make assumption B. What's the difference for the people of Ontario? It's $1.5 billion. This government says, "We're just working it out." That's the problem with this government. It doesn't matter if we're talking about hospital closures, municipal downloading; you people shoot first and worry about the casualties later. Nobody over there is keeping track of what's happening to real people in real communities, and that's the problem.

You mention your legislative committee. I'll put it to you very clearly. In view of the way that you people treat legislative committees — you shut them down when you want to shut them down, you shut people out when you want to shut them out, you close people off, you tell people they don't have any credibility; mayor after mayor came to the megacity committee and your backbenchers ridiculed them because they didn't recite your line — your legislative committee isn't worth anything.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Hampton:** We want an independent commission where the numbers won't change every week. Give us an independent commission. Restore some credibility for the people of Ontario.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I believe the MPPs in this Legislature should have a say about Ontario Hydro, the direction it takes in the future. I don't believe that people who are appointed, who are not elected to this Legislature, who are not responsible to the people, not responsible for the future of these people, have the same right to deal with this particular matter.

I was asked by members opposite to have a legislative committee. We agreed with that. We thought it was good to have an open process among MPPs so they will have their opportunity to exam the plan, to make suggestions on the plan. I believe a legislative committee can do just as good a job as an inquiry, if not better. These people are elected. That's what I want: to hear back from the people through their elected representatives. We will have a legislative committee as promised. That is my answer.

**The Speaker:** New question, the third party, the leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** To the Solicitor General — I would say to the Minister of Environment, nobody has any trust in your legislative committee. Appoint an independent commission and let's get to the bottom of this.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Dufferin-Peel, I don't tell anyone how to ask their questions and I don't tell you how to answer them. They can ask anybody any question they want. If they want to talk about whatever they want to talk about, it's up to them. The same goes for the ministers. There's no rule that says they have to answer it in any specific fashion. So if the leader of the third party wants to ask a question to the Solicitor General and spend some time talking about environment, it's not up to me to bring him to order; just as when the minister wants to respond to a question differently than the questioner would like to hear it, it's not up to me to bring him to order.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** To the Solicitor General: We understand that two young offenders escaped from your boot camp last night. We understand now that they have been located, but this raises serious concerns about your incompetence in your pet project. You were in such a hurry to open this facility that you didn't take care of the details. You didn't check out how good or how thoughtful or how prepared your private American company was for the opening. In fact, you were in such a hurry that we understand you recruited young offenders for this facility who were higher risk than you originally outlined to the public.

My question, Minister, is this: In view of the fact that you rushed ahead again, you didn't look after the details, will you agree to slow this process down and look at the important details, like protecting the security of the public?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** It's interesting to hear the leader of the third party singing a tune about safety of the public. That certainly wasn't their track record during their five years in office. It was at the bottom of their priority list.

I want to say that we are not going to back away from this process. If you take a look at the previous 10 years, at the rate of individuals graduating from the youth justice system into the adult system and at the rate of repeat offenders — over 60% in our youth justice system — clearly the system was failing us. The people of this province were fed up, sick and tired with the status quo. They wanted to see new approaches, and we are taking one to try and deal effectively with young offenders and youth crime in this province, a job they failed to do.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** This is a brand-new prison. This is supposed to solve problems.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I caution the members for London Centre and Riverdale to come to order.

**1430**

**Mr Hampton:** This is so typical of this government. When they do misplay something, when they admit they moved too quickly and they made a mistake, instead of accepting responsibility, instead of solving the problem, they look for somebody to blame. You're not worthy of being a government. You don't accept the responsibility of government.

Let me just take a further example. We've done some investigation of this private American company that is running your boot camp. Their contract with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice was rescinded after a riot broke out at a facility they were managing there. Now we have this situation at Barrie.

Minister, accept some responsibility. Will you admit that once again your government has been reckless? You simply bulldozed ahead; you don't care about the casualties. Will you slow down the process and start taking some responsibility?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** It's interesting to see where the third party gets their research. That story was in Eye magazine. I don't know if they're on contract to the NDP caucus or not. But if they'd done a little research, they would have found out that the principals involved in the company operating the strict discipline facility had left that particular site at the time this incident occurred.

Once again their facts are wrong. If I have to reiterate, the people of this province want to see a strict discipline approach to young offenders, they want to see youth crime curbed, they want to see young offenders dealt with in an effective way, and by God, we're trying to do it.

**Mr Hampton:** I think we just saw an example of this government's impression of accountability: Just don't be too close to it when it all blows up. The minister thinks it's okay that the principals who operated the company got far enough away when the riot happened in Florida. That's this government's impression. That's this government's definition of accountability.

You are responsible to the public. You botched this operation. The young offenders who escaped took a van. Where did they find the keys to the van? In the van itself. This is supposed to be a security situation. You're supposed to be looking after the security of the public in Ontario.

Will you admit that once again your government is bulldozing ahead? You're not looking after the interests of the people of Ontario. You don't care where the casualties are. This is the result. Will you slow down and start paying attention to the important details, the impacts on real people, real communities in Ontario? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** It would be amusing if it wasn't so upsetting, given the nature of this topic, to reflect on the third party with respect to their views on these subjects now versus when they were in government. This member is gauging our success based on one situation, two escapes. I want to put on the record some statistics the members opposite may not be too comfortable with.

In 1991, when the NDP was in power, 48 escapes; in 1991-92, 44 escapes; in 1992-93, 41 escapes. Last year, under a Conservative government, 17 — count them. If we're judging competence, if we're judging accountability, that whole sorry gang should resign.

## EDUCATION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. It would seem that from time you hired your anti-teacher friend, Mr Paroian, to put teachers in the worst possible light, you have taken pleasure in teacher-bashing. Mr Paroian, you'll remember, completely misrepresented the hours that teachers work and their pay per hour, and you let that misimpression sit out there publicly.

Last week, you were quick to make sure that people knew that not many teachers had taken your hastily put together summer seminars. You didn't bother to point out that you couldn't accommodate more than a handful of the teachers who wanted to go. I suggest that this is typical of what happens when you push through your agenda so you can make a political statement and get your advertising campaign under way, but you haven't actually thought about how the whole thing will work. You clearly saw this as another chance to put teachers in a bad public light, to set them up for what you're planning to do to them next.

Minister, apologies after the damage is done are not very satisfying, but do you acknowledge that teachers are not to blame for the problem you have created?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Let me say what I said earlier this week and say again, because I'm pleased to say this for the public record; that is, that Ontario has some of the most qualified teachers in the world, and I believe that there will be no difficulty at all, given the quality and the professionalism of our teachers, in adopting better standards of achieve-

ment for our students in grades 1 to 8, which is the whole point of our curriculum.

The member for Fort William is either ill-informed or hasn't done enough research on my comments, because that's exactly what I've said all week. I've praised the teachers repeatedly this week because I believe they're the key component in making this work.

I don't mind when the member for Fort William twists my words, because that's part of politics. But I object when she takes a potshot at someone like Mr Paroian, who, for a dollar, took a lot of his time and made a report to this government. You can dislike the report, but I'm offended when you take on the individual who did that in public service. I think you should stand on your feet right now and apologize to Mr Paroian for your comments.

**Mrs McLeod:** I'd be happy to bring in Mr Paroian's report and read the misrepresentation directly into the record so the minister can no longer misrepresent that.

I want to agree with the minister on one point, which is a very unusual situation. I too thank God that we have professional teachers who will go into the classrooms in September, close the door and teach kids in spite of the chaos that this minister has created.

The real problem you have created is not for the teachers, and I acknowledge that and they acknowledge that. The real problem you have created is for the kids. It is a fact that you rushed through your curriculum before teachers could be prepared for it. They didn't even have the materials at the end of the school year. It is also fact that elementary school students are coming back to school on Tuesday. They are facing a new curriculum and they have no textbooks and no workbooks to work with. You were in such a hurry to talk about what you were going to make kids learn, but you didn't think it was important to make sure they would have books to learn from.

Why would you not take the time to introduce your curriculum more slowly so that teachers could be properly trained and students would have material to work with?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Once again the member for Fort William has probably inadvertently misrepresented what will happen in the classrooms this fall.

We have heard from teachers right across Ontario who welcomed the clearer standards, the plain English of this curriculum, of the phase-in of this curriculum, changes to languages and maths this year, the other subject mattes of the course of this year. We have done training sessions for boards to make sure they're ready to support teachers in this role.

This curriculum change is being phased in in answer to the requests of teachers. Finally we have a curriculum that will allow them to understand, parents to understand and students to understand what is expected of them on a year-by-year basis. It will be successfully introduced starting next week right across Ontario. It's a welcome change not only to parents and students but also to teachers. The member for Fort William needs to get out and talk to some teachers and find out how receptive they are to this curriculum change.

**1440**

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Perhaps you're aware of the recently released report from the SEIU and CUPE dignity campaign. The report details the response of nurses and nurses' aides to questions regarding quality of care in long-term-care facilities. Minister, 94% of the respondents report a significant decline in the quality of care since you removed the minimum standard of 2.25 hours per day of nursing care per resident.

At the same time the care is deteriorating in nursing homes because of your decisions, you're increasing their load because of the closure of chronic care beds. More of our seniors are in nursing homes. They arrive there sicker, with greater requirements, and they're not getting the care they deserve. If you read this report, it will make your heart ache. The situation is deplorable and is getting worse every day all across Ontario. The situation is urgent. I ask you, what are you going to do today?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I'm very much aware of the report. I read it because I value the opinions of the front-line workers in our almost 500 long-term-care facilities.

First of all, the 2.25 hours, which was a slough to the unions given by the previous government, was never enforced. Many of our homes never had it, and it never applied to the almost 200 homes that are called homes for the aged and run by our counties and upper-tier municipalities. So that is a red herring. Anyone in the industry knows it; you can continue to use it.

This government moved to levels-of-care funding so that if a particular resident needs more than 2.25 hours of care, he or she will receive that. We can clearly say today that having moved to levels-of-care funding, people are getting the type of care they need rather than the cookie-cutter approach that had something to do with your social contract and your dealings with unions and not patient care. We are focusing on patients. Patients are getting the level of care.

Second, the report was done prior to our unprecedented new $100-million reinvestment just made recently which significantly —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**Mrs Boyd:** Are you saying we can have no confidence that every single patient in a long-term-care facility will have a minimum level of care? I think that's disgraceful and the people of Ontario will think that's disgraceful. You dropped the minimum standard. You are increasing the demands on the institutions and on the staff. Right now, before a single chronic care hospital is closed in the province, there are 16,000 seniors on waiting lists for placements in facilities. Your $100 million is less than a drop in the bucket.

What's even worse, Minister, and I think you know this, because you've put no limits on how those dollars are

going to be used, you have no assurance that those dollars are actually going into patient care. On the contrary, because there are no rules, we know that long-term-care facilities are putting this money into paying down debts, covering workers' compensation penalties, covering sick costs, buying equipment. It is not necessarily going to improve patient care. What are you going to do to improve this situation?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** We've increased the level of care by moving to levels-of-care funding. Now, with the new rules, nurses from an institution down the street or in another town come in and assess every resident, and they are funded according to the level of care they need, not some cookie-cutter approach that has nothing to do with patient care.

Second, we put in 100 million new dollars with strings attached using your Bill 101 —

**Mrs Boyd:** No strings attached.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Absolutely none; no strings attached.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** You must be reading Ms Martel's weekly column in a Sudbury paper, where she has it totally wrong.

Please read my letter to the editor which was faxed yesterday, which reminds you and your colleagues of Bill 101, which brought levels-of-care funding. But rather than put a new $100 million in, you did a thing with the unions that had nothing to do with patient care. We have fully implemented your Bill 101 —

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** — which says $70 million of the $100 million must go to new hires, to new nursing and personal care hours, and the other breakdown: $10 million is to go for programming — that's social activities, physiotherapy — and $20 million to —

**The Speaker:** New question.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Over the past 10 years, government services have become costly to deliver and administer, not to mention very complex for the taxpayers of this province to understand. Our government is addressing those concerns.

Last winter the government introduced its Who Does What legislation to redefine what level of government could best deliver services to the local taxpayer. On May 1, 1997, after positive and constructive discussion with AMO, our government announced a new provincial-municipal partnership. One important component of that Who Does What announcement was the creation of a community reinvestment fund and a transition assistance fund.

Minister, municipalities in my riding would like to know when your ministry will complete the criteria for municipalities to access these funds and when they can expect to see those dollars.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'd like to thank the member for Peterborough for the very timely question. As the members know, we announced the upper-tier numbers and the effects of the transfers on August 6. We met with AMO earlier this week, and as part of that meeting there was a meeting of the two implementation teams, one for municipal affairs and one for social services. The two implementation teams are determining now the criteria for the distribution of the funds. They're also reviewing the criteria of how the numbers were developed.

I'm advised by the co-chairs of the committees that met yesterday that the meetings went extremely well. There's a lot of optimism. The Premier assured AMO that the transfer of services would be revenue-neutral. We're working on that now and the numbers should be out and should be ready probably before the end of September if all goes well.

**Mr Stewart:** As you can well appreciate, municipalities are working hard at restructuring and working hard on planning the types of services to be delivered next year. Can you assure me today that municipalities in my riding and in many other ridings will have enough lead time to access these transition funds in time for the January 1, 1998, implementation date?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again I'd like to thank the member for Peterborough for the very excellent and very timely question, one that I know most members of this House are interested in.

Yes, I think I can assure the member that the information the municipalities will require will be available for them in time to prepare their 1998 budgets. One of the most important issues that has to be decided at this time is how the education costs are determined, and that's the one thing we've asked the municipal implementation team to deal with. Once the municipal implementation team has dealt with that very important issue, it should be relatively easy to develop the rest of the information that's required to allow municipalities to prepare their budgets.

I am quite confident that the member for Peterborough can advise the constituents in his municipalities that that information will be available in time for them to prepare their 1998 budgets.

**1450**

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. It revolves around gas prices, which have certainly been on the front burner.

I want to address this as to what you can do and what we can do here in the province, not as an issue you would slough off to the federal government.

Just recently the provincial government in Newfoundland appointed a consumer advocate to take a look at gas prices in Newfoundland. That person will examine the prices in that province. When we take a look at gas prices in northern Ontario — Dryden at 65.7 cents, Red Lake at

72.8, Fort Frances at 65.9, Ignace at 67.9 — we see a very large discrepancy in gas prices. Minister, will you commit today to do the same here in Ontario as they've done in Newfoundland?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I'll tell you what I will commit to today. I'll commit to carrying this unanimous, I believe, belief in this House that the gas prices are outrageous right now in Ontario. We require your support, to the honourable member. We'll be taking this to the provincial ministers' conference.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** This is important. I can give you a million quotes from when your government was in power and from when their government was in power in terms of how you guys did nothing. But we're going to take some steps to get the provincial ministers together to make sure that Mr Manley, your cousin in federal politics, understands what his role is. Mr Manley doesn't believe he has any responsibility. However, it's interesting what he said today and what he said in 1994 and 1995.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** In 1994, Mr Manley said, "The bureau of competition policy will continue to actively monitor industry developments to keep the marketplace competitive and will enforce all relevant provisions of the Competition Act." Clearly he knows it's his responsibility —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr Miclash:** Let me go on. Today I spoke to the people in Sandy Lake. They're paying $1.29 a litre for gasoline in Sandy Lake.

Minister, I have given you an opportunity to say you will appoint an advocate to take a look at the gas prices as they compare in southern Ontario to northern Ontario. Rather than saying it's someone else's fault, why don't you face up to the fact that we can do something here in Ontario and appoint an advocate? Again I call upon you. Will you appoint a consumer advocate to take a look at gas pricing across the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** It's interesting how in government people seem to have very short memories. Clearly, when you people were in power you chose to do absolutely nothing.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Come on, David. Set up the commission. It's easy

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I heard one of the opposition members say, "It's easy." It was so easy that in five years you guys didn't do it. That's real easy.

I'll tell you something. Mr McTeague, MP from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, was kind enough to share with me his thoughts on this with respect to his government. He said: "Again I'm compelled to inform you" — this is addressed to Mr Manley — "in no uncertain terms that my constituents are fed up with seeing significant gas price increases based on what the major oil companies feel they can get away with." Then he says, "It's becoming quite clear it's time for our government" — his government meaning the federal Liberal government — "to be that voice and take action. That's why I'm asking again for a full inquiry into the oil industry to examine the root causes." We agree with that. We'll be taking that to the provincial ministers' conference.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question for the Minister of Health.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I saw the door open, and here he is. Go ahead, member for Sudbury East.

**Ms Martel:** I have a question regarding your funding for long-term-care facilities, Minister. On June 30 you promised, "We are putting the residents' needs first by increasing the amount of nursing care they receive and adding new funding for care for other professionals such as physiotherapists."

In July, Extendicare York in Sudbury received $793,000 as part of your funding. Imagine the surprise of the residents and staff when the administrator advised that of the $793,000 received, only $64,700 would be spent on staff to provide more care. This is a facility where at least six part-time CUPE health care workers are still on layoff from 1996; 26 part-time and 17 full-time health care workers are still on reduced hours since March 1997. The residents at Extendicare York aren't going to see any new increased care. They're not even getting back to the levels they had before March 1997.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Ms Martel:** Can you explain to the residents how their needs are being put first when the gap between —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Health.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The specifics for that particular home, Extendicare York: It did receive about $500,000 of the $100 million, and $230,000 has been spent on hiring new full-time care workers. We checked this as a result of your call; we checked it and doublechecked it this morning. Some $30,000 has been spent on hiring part-time care workers, four of them — that's four full-time, four part-time — and $75,000 has been spent ensuring that staffing levels remain constant when employees call in sick. Apparently that was a particular problem up there that you've complained about in the past. Now they're able to correct it with 75,000 new dollars.

Some of the $500,000 — to be precise, $140,000 — was spent on WCB premiums that provide full coverage for the workers, something that your party traditionally used to agree with. An additional $20,000 was spent on new equipment that's designed to reduce the number of work-related injures; for example, lifting equipment.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** This reinvestment is designed to cut down on workers' injuries, so I don't know how you can be opposed to that.

That is what they are spending their money on. That is what we're sending the cheques for.

**Ms Martel:** The facility received $793,000. That comes from information I got from your long-term-care division in Sudbury. I got it for that facility and for the other three. That's where the amount comes from. The information with respect to $64,000 comes from a meeting that was held with the union and the administrator, and I will send you a copy of that, Minister.

The fact of the matter is, of the $793,000 that they had received at the beginning of July, only $64,000 will go on to staff. The reason for that is that in making your announcement, you did not put one condition, one rule, one policy in place to ensure that the money would directly go to more staff for more resident care. This administrator, like administrators in the 494 other facilities, will be able to use money to pay for WCB penalties, will be able to use money to recoup sick leave because so many staff are being hurt because they're understaffed.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Ms Martel:** It will be used on supplies and will be used, as in this case, on profit, because of the profit envelope for profit centres. These residents will not see increased care.

What guarantee are you going to give them that you're going to put a condition in place —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I'll once again check with the same office that the honourable member claims to have checked with and we checked with this morning. We'll just doublecheck it. But the law is clear. I invite you to go to the library and get a copy of your law, Bill 101.

Under Bill 101, 70% of this money — because we fully enacted the bill, which you left in abeyance, by the way, untouched until we got to office — is to go to increased staffing, more hours of care; 20% is going to accommodation, to improve the buildings, because we know some of our buildings are below standard in the province, and that will be bring them up significantly, and dietary services, and 10% is for programming, social activities and physiotherapy.

That's where the money is to go under the law. If the honourable member has evidence that the law is being broken, we will fully investigate that. I take her comments at face value because she's an honourable member and I endeavoured to check right down to the penny exactly how this particular home is spending its money. I've done that. I will triplecheck the facts.

**1500**

## WINE INDUSTRY

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. As all members of the House will know, Ontario wines are among the best in the world. Many of them are made right in my area of Niagara.

Recently, Minister, you were in the area to make an announcement that our wineries would be able to bottle 100% imported wine. This was good news. Wineries in other provinces have been able to do this for quite some time. My question to you is, how will this affect production of Ontario wines and the excellent reputation Ontario wines have achieved?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I thank the member for Niagara Falls for that question. He clearly knows, as do other members from the Niagara area, of the fine reputation Ontario wines have. In fact, over the course of the last several years they have won various gold medals, from Vinexpo, VinItaly, from the International Wine and Spirits Competition in England. There is a very bright future for wines in Ontario.

The bottling of foreign wines is really a complementary activity to the wine industry. As you probably know, this is a temporary measure, because under the internal trade agreement, on January 1, 2000, other provinces that bottle 100% foreign wine will have access to Ontario markets. This gives our wineries the opportunity to compete before the market is fully open. It makes some sense, considering that the wineries in Ontario create jobs in Ontario, and it boosts the ancillary industries that provide us with the glass, the packaging. It's good news for the Niagara region. I think all members agree that boosting and helping our wine industry is a good thing.

**Mr Maves:** As the minister knows, the quality of grapes in Ontario, especially in the Niagara region, has increased dramatically over the last 10 years. I wonder what impact this will have on Ontario grape growers.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I'm happy to report that when we embarked upon this initiative, the very first meeting we had was attended by the Ontario Wine Council but also by the Ontario grape growers. This was very important for us, to make sure they maintain the support for the grape-growing industry in Ontario.

I must tell you that Mr Neufeld, the chair of the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board, was enthusiastic about the event. He attended the event in Niagara and said: "It will bring in extra cash, make use of equipment which is often standing idle. It should also create spinoffs for other industries, such as producers of glass, labels and boxes, and help to create jobs." He also said that anything that strengthens the wine industry is good for the grape growers.

This is an opportunity for Ontario wineries to actually make some inroads into the imported wine area, to maintain and of course enhance our share of the domestic market. As I said before, the initiative will create jobs, protect jobs certainly, but enhance the industry in the Niagara region. It's good news.

## PUBLIC HOUSING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.You spoke before AMO this week. We have had an ongoing discussion about the costs associated with downloading social housing to municipalities. We believe that in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars associated with the operating cost there will be even fur-

ther cost increases downloaded to municipalities with respect to the state of capital repairs to municipal housing.

Can you provide the House today and municipalities across this province with your estimate of the capital costs associated with bringing public housing projects to up to date, particularly in Toronto, just in terms of the building code and the fire code?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** The government has set up a group, a review team, to go out and review social housing and come up with that estimate of required costs.

I can tell the member that we have set out $215 million in the budget this year to start those repairs. There is an additional $100 million available from the federal government and the province to keep up ongoing repairs.

There isn't any doubt that the state of repair of our social housing in the province of Ontario is dismal. For the last 10 years it has been allowed to deteriorate and rot away while the two previous governments did absolutely nothing about it. We're putting hundreds of millions of dollars into the repair of social housing. We'll continue those social housing repairs until they actually become liveable for those people who have to live in them.

## PETITIONS

### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and deals with gas prices.

"Whereas we, the consumers, feel gas prices are too high throughout Ontario;

"Whereas we, the consumers, support the Ontario Liberal caucus's attempt to have the Mike Harris government introduce predatory gas pricing legislation;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want the Mike Harris government to act so that the consumer can get a break at the pumps rather than going broke at them;

"Whereas we, the consumers, are fuming at being hosed at the pumps and want Mike Harris to gauge our anger;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want Mike Harris to know we want to be able to go to the pumps and fill our gas tanks without emptying our pockets;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce predatory gas pricing legislation in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps, or to appoint a commission to investigate these prices, or to appoint a consumer advocate to ensure that pricing is fair."

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition.

### NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm submitting a petition today that was sent to me by Linda Beatty, who is a member of CUPE 994, a caretaker for the City of York Board of Education. She has collected 690 signatures on this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas non-instructional staff of boards of education provide an important and essential service to schools in Ontario;

"Whereas outsourcing of non-instructional jobs such as school secretaries, clerical, caretaker-maintenance, audio-visual technicians, computer technicians, educational assistants and cleaners, will result in chaos and poor service and limited savings, if any;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas, in Bill 136, non-instructional staff are being denied the same rights to bargain for decent working conditions;

"Therefore, we would request that Bill 136 be withdrawn and any future legislation include input from employee groups."

I'm in full agreement and have affixed my signature to these petitions.

### VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north, fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax."

I support this petition and therefore I will sign it.

### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition signed by 123 residents of Ontario. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many questions concerning the events preceding, during and after the fatal shooting of Anthony Dudley George on September 6, 1995, at Ipperwash Provincial Park, where over 200 armed officers were sent to control 25 unarmed men and women have not been answered:

"Whereas the officers involved in the beating of Bernard George were not held responsible for their actions;

"Whereas the Ontario Provincial Police refused to cooperate with the Special Investigations Unit in recording the details that night;

"Whereas the influence and communications of Lambton MPP Marcel Beaubien with the government have been verified through transcripts presented in the Legislature;

"Whereas the trust of the portfolio of native affairs held by Attorney General Charles Harnick is compromised by his continual refusal for a full public inquiry into the events at Ipperwash;

"Whereas the promised return of Camp Ipperwash to the Stony Point Nation by the federal Ministry of Defence and the serious negotiations of land claims by both the provincial and federal governments could have avoided a conflict;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for a full public inquiry to be held into the events surrounding the fatal shooting of Dudley George on September 6, 1995, to eliminate all misconceptions held by and about the government, the OPP and the Stony Point people."

I have signed the petition.

**1510**

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax does not recognize the uniqueness of the north; and

"Whereas Mike Harris should know that gas prices are higher in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas the new Mike Harris northern vehicle registration tax is blatantly unfair to the north; and

"Whereas we have no voice for the north, fighting for northerners around the cabinet table;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to revoke the new tax imposed on the north and convince the Tory government to understand that northern Ontario residents do not want the new Mike Harris vehicle registration tax which takes effect on September 1."

I affix my signature to this petition.

## BLOOD SYSTEM

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition which reads:

"We, the undersigned, residents of Ontario, draw your attention to the following:

"That over 70% of persons with haemophilia were infected with hepatitis C through the use of blood-derived treatment products. With hepatitis C as with HIV, the same institutional players of the blood system failed to respond to the identified risk of transmission, failed to properly notify people of the potential risk of exposure, failed to implement safety measures to lessen the risk of transmission, that is, the failure of the Red Cross to implement surrogate testing for hepatitis C for over four years, and now continue to deny any responsibility for these failures.

"That the representatives of Hemophilia Ontario and its hepatitis C task force have been advocating for financial compensation to those individuals who have been infected with hepatitis C through the Canadian blood system. The provincial Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, has three times cancelled meetings with Hemophilia Ontario, and the provincial and territorial ministers of health have publicly stated that they intend to keep the issue of hepatitis C compensation off their agenda in future meetings; and

"Further, that the only prescribed treatment for hepatitis C in Ontario is alpha interferon, which has a less than 25% success rate in clearing the virus among people who have had one exposure to the virus. Many haemophiliacs were repeatedly exposed to the hepatitis C virus through the use of blood-derived treatment products. The response to interferon therapy in haemophiliacs with chronic HCV infection is poor and appears inferior to that of other groups of infected patients. In view of the generally poor response to interferon therapy in haemophiliacs, treatment with interferon is inappropriate in the majority of individuals, according to an article in Blood magazine, volume 87, number 5, March 1996.

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon you to meet with representatives of Hemophilia Ontario's hepatitis C task force now to discuss issues related to compensation."

I have many, many of these petitions. They are, unfortunately, not correctly addressed and I will be passing them on as I get them to the Minister of Health.

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 SUR LA RÉFORME DE L'AIDE SOCIALE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 142, An Act to revise the law related to Social Assistance by enacting the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, by repealing the Family Benefits Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act and the General Welfare Assistance Act and by amending several other Statutes / Projet de loi 142, Loi révisant la loi relative à l'aide sociale en édictant la Loi sur le programme Ontario au travail et la Loi sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées, en abrogeant la Loi sur les prestations familiales, la Loi sur les services de réadaptation professionnelle et la Loi sur l'aide sociale générale et en modifiant plusieurs autres lois.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** When we finished the discussion of this the last time around, I had indicated that one of the biggest concerns that we have

and that those who work with people on social assistance have is the impossibility of really gauging what is meant by this bill.

This bill again and again relies on what in the legislation is called "prescribed measures," "prescribed guidelines," "prescribed limits," and the reality is that virtually everything is left up to regulation, and that creates real anxiety among those whose very lives depend upon the provisions of this new act. I think there is a willingness, in fact I know there is a willingness, on the part of many people in Ontario to want to believe that what the minister has created in this act is going to be a better system.

I do not think there are many recipients or many agencies who deal with social assistance all the time who would not agree that there needed to be some change and in particular there needed to be some change that would clearly identify the rights of those who are disabled and provide them with greater security.

I think when we talk about an act and we raise issues that concern us, it's important to understand that those issues are being raised because there are real questions and real fears and because the act in and of itself does not answer many of the questions that have arisen.

I said when I began my speech that I wanted to actually read into the record the sections of the bill that pertain to regulation-making because I think it will be evident immediately to anyone listening that everything in this bill is left up in the air and that basically by this bill the government has perpetuated the ability of the Lieutenant Governor in Council in some cases, the minister in other cases, the administrator or director of the program in other cases, to make arbitrary decisions that affect the lives of individuals.

Let me start with schedule A of the bill. I think it's important for people to know that the actual bill itself, as is common with this government, is only two pages long. Basically, it repeals the bills that are going to be repealed and talks about schedules A, B, C, D and E and then each individual piece is part of a schedule, which I think is rather interesting in and of itself.

But in schedule A, section 74, the regulation section, let me just read it because I think it proves our case:

"The Lieutenant Governor in Council" — and for those who aren't aware of the language, that means the cabinet of the day — "may make regulations,

"1. prescribing the persons to be included in a benefit unit;"

This means that the regulations will say who comprises a benefit unit. Whether it includes dependent children, whether it includes every member of the family who's living together or not, the regulations will prescribe that.

"2. respecting the determination of budgetary requirements, income and assets and the maximum value of assets permitted;"

People need to know that at the drop of a hat, with no warning, the cabinet of the day can change the budgetary requirements, what is considered to be the basic life-sustaining requirements of individuals on social assistance, their "income and assets and the maximum value of assets permitted."

"3. respecting the determination of the amount of assistance to be provided and the time and manner of providing it, including who is eligible to receive the assistance and how to determine what portion of assistance is provided with respect to each person;"

That means, in passing this bill, we have no idea what the parameters are of what will be deemed to be by a cabinet of the day the appropriate level of income and to whom it is to go.

**1520**

"4. respecting the employment assistance and the standards delivery agents must meet in providing employment assistance;"

This is extremely important because of course the whole supposed raison d'être of this bill is to get people back to work, to give them assistance to get back into the workforce. But we don't know what the standards are going to be or what the guidelines are going to be. We don't know what the level of support is going to be, and certainly the record of this government in putting workfare into place has been abysmal to this point.

"5. respecting standards and conditions of community participation activities;"

This is particularly worrying because while I think most people would agree that it is beneficial for people who are dependent upon social assistance to become more active in their communities, to be part of that community, to feel more hooked in, to get some of the supports from the community, we also know that it is very difficult at this point to get community agencies to feel comfortable about this program because they don't know what the standards and conditions are going to be regarding community participation activities and they don't know how they are going to be required to administer these.

"6. respecting income assistance and determining who may be eligible for income assistance;"

Same problem — all up in the air: Who's going to be eligible? That of course is the real concern that people have, that the eligibility requirements are going to be tightened and tightened and tightened to the point where many people will live in need and will in fact fall into an irreversible cycle of poverty.

"7. respecting the items, services and payments that may be included as benefits and determining who may be eligible for benefits;

"8. respecting emergency assistance and determining who may be eligible for emergency assistance;

"9. respecting the conditions of eligibility for assistance including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing,

"(i) additional conditions relating to eligibility for assistance," — that's a worrying one because if there are general eligibility ones, this enables them to add at the drop of a hat additional eligibility conditions and not necessarily to do that to the whole class of recipients;

"(ii) information to be provided, including the time and manner of providing that information, verification of that information and home visits,

"(iii) changes in circumstances,

"(iv) the disposition of property,

"(v) the obligation to satisfy participation requirements related to employment measures and community participation,

"(vi) the obligation to obtain compensation or to realize a financial resource,"

Do we understand that this means that people may be forced to sell assets that, if realized at a time that we don't know, may in fact disadvantage them? "The obligation to obtain compensation." Will people be forced to enter into litigation with the insurance company of the person whose car has disabled them in the first place without any kind of assistance? We don't know.

"(vii) requirements to reimburse delivery agents and to give assignments to delivery agents,"

That is rather bothersome and you will find out later on why it's so bothersome because it prescribes the way in which people may have to repay the assistance that they received when they subsequently manage to get a job, and we'll talk about why that may be a real concern.

"(viii) a person's status in the country."

Given the furore that is arising over the whole issue of the new immigrants from Czechoslovakia, when we hear about this person's status in the country, any cabinet — we aren't just talking about this cabinet; this means any cabinet of the day — can make requirements around the status of persons in the country; in other words, make eligibility very, very much dependent on the status in the country. We know there are many people who wait many, many months to receive the attention of the immigration department, and it is not in any of our best interests to see those people without some income during that period of time.

"10. respecting the termination of residence in Ontario;"

There had been a provision, as you know, that people were supposed to have some sense of universal portability of benefits. What we know respecting the determination of residency is that this allows the possibility for people to determine whether someone is resident in Ontario if they, for example, were outside of the province for a very limited period of time. We don't know what it means. We're not sure, and we would like to know.

"11. prescribing classes of persons who are not eligible for assistance;"

That's an interesting one. It has always been a worry when that kind of language is there in terms of regulation, because the classes of people who are not eligible, never eligible, never able to apply, could change as a result of a cabinet decree.

"12. respecting the provision and delivery of emergency hostel services, including funding, authority of delivery agents to contract with third parties to provide those services, the minimum standards and conditions to be included in such agreements and maximum daily amounts to be cost shared;"

Of course there needs to be regulation of hostels. One of the things that is upsetting many people in the province so much is that this government, through its rent control decontrol legislation, is removing the protection that people in hostels had under the Landlord and Tenant Act. So this is a very important section.

I repeat that it is similar to the kinds of powers of regulation that were in the current legislation. I repeat that the problem with these is that reform of the social assistance system ought to have been built on a much more transparent, much more reliable system than a system that allows these standards and regulations to be changed at whim, from day to day, by the government in power.

"13. respecting the determination of financial need for the purposes of section 10;"

Normally this is always a power that is there, because from time to time things change, but it certainly is a worry when we have a large body of neo-conservative literature that challenges the accepted levels of need for basic survival in this country in a very substantial way. I refer of course to some of the materials coming out of the Fraser Institute, Mr David Frum's articles and a number of other neo-con writers who challenge the accepted poverty levels, the accepted standards around what it means to be a poor person, what basic need is.

"14. respecting the powers of an administrator with respect to liens, and the process for securing and discharging a lien."

One of the elements in this is that of those people in need who have been deemed to be eligible for assistance, one of the provisions of this act would allow the administrator to put a lien on their home. Many people don't understand that there are those who fall into poverty after they have managed to purchase that primary home. Any other property has always been subject to the asset requirements of social assistance. But this bill gives the opportunity to the administrator to put a lien on someone's home if they are unfortunate enough to fall into a situation where they are required to rely upon social assistance. If they become able to be productive again, if they have to move to follow a job, the lien can be called in and they will lose some of their equity in that property.

**1530**

There is a real concern about what the long-term implications of that process might be, because we all know of many cases where it is cheaper for the government to keep people in their own home because the cost is lower than it is to rent a property in a similar place, particularly if, as we all hope, this kind of process is a temporary poverty issue, not a long-term issue; although I might say that the same power is there in terms of a home owned by a disabled person. I'll talk more about that later.

"15. respecting applications for basic financial assistance and the information to be included in an application;"

In other words, regulation can determine what can be asked of an applicant, what amount of information is there.

"16. requiring applications and other documents to be prepared in a form and manner approved by the director;

"17. respecting the consequences of failing to satisfy a condition of eligibility including fixing periods of ineligibility;"

What's anticipated by this is that if someone were to become ineligible for some reason — say perhaps they didn't provide, in exactly the time required, the information that was requested — they could be disallowed for any period of time. There's no fix in the legislation on that; it's all up to regulation.

Those of us who run constituency offices know that with the tightening down of the family benefits plan in the last few months, the requirement is that people have their information in the hands of the family benefits administrator by the 7th of the month. What we are finding is that people immediately get letters that tell them they are going to be ineligible even though the local offices agree that they get so much information in that they can't process it within the period of time.

This is a worry, because if, based on an inability to manage information — and we know that's a big problem for this government. We saw the problem in the family support plan around trying to deal with the basic flow of information that comes in every month. You have to worry about this fixing of periods of ineligibility and doing that by regulation.

I think people understand that governments need ways to control what they perceive to be a problem, but when it is so open-ended, particularly when we are talking about a system that is there to meet the basic requirements of life, it's a worry that we don't know what this government intends or what any subsequent government could intend in terms of periods of ineligibility.

"18. respecting reinstating basic financial assistance or returning it to its former level and the procedures which apply;"

One of the biggest complaints about the welfare system in this province has always been that these kinds of regulations, the procedures that apply when someone is reapplying for eligibility, when someone wants to get back on, are seldom printed. In fact, one of the biggest problems is that it's almost a mystery to the people administering it.

What would be much more impressive here would be if there were a requirement for those kinds of regulations to be immediately available to someone who requests. They may well be available to workers, but when individuals ask for copies of regulations, it's very hard to get hold of them. One of the basic criticisms the Thomson report heard, that all of the reform folks have heard, is that having that basic information available, making sure it doesn't change rapidly from month, having it set down in a firm way, would be appropriate.

"19. prescribing the procedures to be followed in determining the need for and appointing a person to act for a recipient under section 17 and providing measures with respect to the person's accountability and reporting requirements;"

This is a very serious section. There is a provision in this bill that notwithstanding the Substitute Decisions Act, which has received a great deal of attention, notwithstanding the ability of people to try and have some control over their own lives, to be as independent as possible — I think we hear the minister talk about that from time to time — this bill would allow the director or the administrator to name someone to look after the money that comes from social assistance to someone simply because that person may deem the person to be incapable of looking after the money. This regulation, regulation 19 under schedule A, section 74, will determine how that happens. We don't even know what the guidelines are going to be or what the process will be, what the appeal process would be for this, because the regulations are going to determine that from time to time.

"20. providing rules for the payment of a portion of basic financial assistance for the purposes of section 18 directly to a third party;"

Here, of course, is where the minister made her promise to landlords that she would make it possible in all elements of the social assistance program for rent to be paid directly to landlords. That's what this is about, and it tells us that this is going to be subject to rules that are made by regulation. We don't know what those requirements are in the bill. That will all be up to regulations.

"21. respecting the reconciliation of overpayments among delivery agents where overpayments are owed to one delivery agent and recovered by another and respecting overpayments recovered by reason of subsection 19(3);"

This anticipates, of course, the issue that we know is very sensitive to municipalities around how they can deal with a government when they are the delivery agent for all of these things, what happens when there is a combination of delivery agents, and that is certainly quite a possibility in terms of one municipality to another and the transition phases.

"22. respecting the information to be included in a notice of decision regarding an overpayment, the calculation and recovery of overpayments and the maximum amounts which may be deducted from basic financial assistance when recovering an overpayment;"

This is extremely important, because one of the issues in this bill is that the delivery agent may, but is not required to, as I read the act, provide the information around overpayment. This particular regulation is talking about how all this comes about, how it's calculated, but the act itself does not provide that the person receiving the overpayment is made aware of that necessarily. The delivery agent may, but is not required to.

"23. prescribing debts for the purposes of subsection 23(2) and the priority of recovery of those debts;"

This is a worry, because it anticipates that the government would put itself first in the line of creditors. That's what's implied here, that where there is a recovery of debts — and under this act, of course, there is a provision that if someone receives social assistance and subsequently gets work, they may be required to pay a portion or all of the assistance that they received under this act. This is quite a switch when we think about basic subsistence levels.

"24. prescribing additional matters that may be appealed under this act;"

There are very few things under this act that can be appealed. One of the biggest concerns that people have is that the appeal mechanism has certainly been greatly changed and there are very, very few elements that can be appealed. This will actually allow additional elements to be appealed, but we don't know what those might be or whether they would be allowed.

"25. respecting the requirement for and procedures to be followed in conducting an internal review;"

It's good that there are going to be internal reviews. One assumes those are internal reviews of the process of the delivery agent or the process of the government in making its transfer payments, but it would be nice to know what the standards are going to be now.

**1540**

"26. prescribing the time within which an internal review may be requested and, if requested, to be completed;

"27. prescribing the time within which an appeal to the tribunal may be filed;"

Is it going to be like so many of the other acts that this government has put forward, where the time frames are so short that people do not have an opportunity to inform themselves, to avail themselves of assistance and to meet those deadlines? I talk about the rent control legislation where again and again delegations told us: "Those time limits are too short. They do not allow the kind of time to tenants to be able to appeal a decision, to be able to have the forms sent.

"29. respecting the requirement to record evidence whether by transcript or notes of members taken at a hearing;" This is kind of important because —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I wish we could get that from the Premier on Ipperwash.

**Mrs Boyd:** Exactly. It would be nice if we could get it from the Premier on Ipperwash.

This means that the cabinet will decide what due process is in terms of the recording of notes at a hearing. I don't think that's appropriate. I think this act should spell out that it is the right of someone to have notes or to have a transcript taken in a way that then they can look at it and have access to it so that they can know what was actually said.

"30. respecting the record of proceedings for the purposes of proceedings before a court;"

The same issue. If people are not able to get the information, if there is no record, how on earth are you to have due process?

"31. prescribing the classes of appeals to which delivery agents must give notice to the director;

"32. respecting the determination of interim assistance for the purposes of section 30;"

This is a big issue, because where there are long waits in order to get a determination of the appropriate eligibility or the appropriate level of assistance, often interim assistance is granted because this is subsistence assistance. The whole purpose behind it is to make sure that people aren't starving in the streets. This allows the determination of interim assistance.

"33. prescribing the period within which a new appeal is not permitted for the purposes of subsection 34(2);"

Here we are again. This is going to be prescribed by regulation. It isn't in the act. From time to time it can be changed, and from time to time we know that regulations are not always communicated to those to whom they apply. We are in for, I would suspect, some real difficulties around flow of information.

"34. respecting the powers and duties of a delivery agent for the purposes of this act;"

This is extremely important because in negotiating a download of responsibilities for the family benefits plan on to the municipalities and the municipalities taking on the delivery of these programs, it is essential to know what those standards are going to be, what the standards and guidelines, what the powers and duties of a delivery agent are. How can we discuss and pass a bill when we're buying a pig in a poke? We don't know what the agreements between the government and the delivery agents are going to be. We don't know what those standards of delivery are going to be and we don't even know at this point in time whether even the most basic flow of information is going to be required in terms of this act.

"35. respecting the costs incurred under this act to which cost-sharing should apply and providing for how they are to be shared, including the apportioning of those costs among Ontario municipalities and persons living in territory without municipal organization, and prescribing the municipalities to which cost-sharing applies;"

If I were a municipal politician, I'd be saying: "This is not going to be set out anywhere except in regulation? The government makes regulation by itself, not necessarily with consultation with me, and the regulation could be changed around the cost-sharing of this program?" I think there are a lot of municipalities that are expressing great concern about the download of responsibility and what it's going to cost them to administer the new responsibilities that are being handed to them by the province. If I were a municipal politician I'd be saying, "I want the cost-sharing set down in the legislation, the 80-20 cost-sharing that's been promised, not in a regulation."

"36. respecting the determination of cost estimates and actual costs and the reconciliation of them and respecting reserves for working funds;"

Municipalities, sit up and take notice, because all of this is going to be part of regulation.

"37. respecting the determination of the amounts Ontario shall pay to delivery agents and delivery agents shall pay to Ontario and the methods of determining those amounts, providing for the manner in which and the intervals at which payments shall be made, for the suspension or withholding of amounts payable by Ontario or part of them and for making deductions from them;"

We've already heard how sensitive municipalities are about the way this government has been treating them. I'd be worried if I were them that this was going to be left up to regulation and can be changed any time.

"38. respecting the apportionment among municipalities in a geographic area of their share of the delivery agent's costs incurred under this act and, for the purpose, prescribing the municipalities that must share in that apportionment and the manner in which that share shall be recovered;"

This isn't going to be done by negotiation with the municipalities. This is going to be done by regulation by the cabinet.

"39. providing for the recovery by Ontario from a delivery agent of any amounts paid by Ontario under this act for which the delivery agent is liable or for the recovery by Ontario or a delivery agent from a recipient of assistance or from his or her estate of amounts paid by Ontario or the delivery agent under this act, and prescribing the circumstances and manner in which any such recovery may be made;"

The anticipation here is that the cabinet of the day will make a determination about this issue of cost recovery, both from delivery agents and from recipients.

"40. prescribing additional powers and duties of administrators and the director and providing for the manner in which administrators shall exercise their powers and duties;"

The biggest complaint about this act is that the director and the administrators have far too much power already under this act, and power that cannot be appealed. But this provision allows the prescribing of additional powers.

"41. respecting agreements between the director and delivery agents and between delivery agents and third parties;"

Third parties? What third parties? Is this going to allow municipalities to contract out the delivery of their services once they have an agreement with the ministry? Is this going to allow the delivery agents to give third parties the ability to administer this act and share the information? It certainly is anticipated in the act, if you read it, because of the way the information-sharing portions of the bill go on.

"42. prescribing the powers and duties of eligibility review officers and family support workers and providing for the manner in which they shall exercise their powers and duties;"

Given the extraordinary powers that these people have under this new act, it would be a comfort to have some idea at least of what those powers and duties are going to be, and also how they're going to work.

One of the real concerns about downloading the responsibility to every area is that there will be an inequitable provision of support to recipients across the province. We already know that under the general welfare assistance the way in which municipalities treat welfare recipients varies remarkably from one municipality to another. One of the biggest concerns about the province allowing all these multiple delivery systems for these kinds of assistance is that the inequity, that unevenness, has an opportunity to really abound, so it is really important that we have some idea of how strong these standards are going to be and of how they are going to be administered, how they are going to be evaluated, how we can be sure that where delivery agents do not respect the rights of recipients in the appropriate way, do not deliver in the way that's envisioned by the guidelines of the government, what the mechanism is for dealing with that.

**1550**

Paragraph 43 talks about the "rules of application to members of bands living on reserves...including the provision, delivery, administration of funding of assistance and prescribing the reserves or geographic areas to which those rules apply.

"44. respecting the giving of notice for the purposes of this act;"

As I said before, there are many areas where it is not necessary for a recipient to get a notice where one would expect they would be notified.

**Mr Wildman:** In other words, they'd just be surprised.

**Mrs Boyd:** They'd get a surprise in the mail, that's right, or get a surprise when the cheque comes, because they don't even know it's going to be smaller.

"45. respecting the subrogation rights under section 70;

"46. prescribing the powers and duties to which the penalty in section 76 may apply and the rules for determining the penalty to be imposed for each power or duty and the manner in which that penalty is to be recovered;

"47. defining any word or expression used in this act that has not been defined in this act;"

There's an interesting one, particularly given the languaging that this government does, as Mr Snobelen would say, where words mean very different things than in normal usage. One wonders about that provision.

"48. prescribing any matter referred to in this act as prescribed;"

I went through and I started marking off the number of times it said "the prescribed action by the prescribed person in the prescribed way." The act itself doesn't tell us how this whole system is going to work. We have to wait until the regulations are made, and we have to remember that regulations can be changed at the drop of a hat, at the whim of the government in power.

That's what the cabinet can do. That's a lot of power. But listen to what the minister, without even talking to cabinet colleagues, can do, the powers that the minister has:

"The minister may make regulations,

"1. prescribing standards a delivery agent is to meet in carrying out its functions and the procedures and practices to be followed by the delivery agent;"

In other words, the minister gets to decide, from time to time, how this whole delivery of the system is going to be working. The minister gets to designate geographic areas and delivery agents for those geographic areas for the purposes of this act. To be quite frank, I thought that power was given to the Lieutenant Governor in Council earlier on, but apparently the minister can decide that. Again, if I were a municipality in these times of download, I would be worried that the minister can do that without reference to even her cabinet colleagues.

"3. prescribing policy statements which shall be applied in the interpretation and application of this act and the regulations;"

Earlier in the act it's very clear the policy information that is there, that the appeal tribunal can only make decisions according to the policy set by the ministry, not the principles of natural justice, not able to look at the Charter of Rights and Freedoms — that's not within their powers — only the policy statements, the policy of the minister.

"4. providing for the collection, retention, use, disclosure and safeguarding of privacy of personal information referred to in subsection (3)."

The minister makes all the rules around the sharing of information under this act, and every member of this place is aware that the kind of information that is being collected in this act is extremely sensitive, that there are very real worries about the way in which information is going to be shared and, frankly, I don't think it's very smart to put a minister responsible for making the regulations around how that's going to happen, because if there's a snafu, then that minister wears the problem.

Then, of course, here is the crux of it: The minister, not even the cabinet, but the minister gets to make a regulation under paragraph 9 of subsection (1), which may include a requirement that a person:

"(a) provide evidence permitting identification of the person by means of photographic images or encrypted biometric information; and

"(b) provide personal information about a third party that is relevant to determining the person's eligibility."

I'd like to be really clear here. This means the minister of the day is going to be responsible for this very sensitive, very controversial collection of personal information, and the minister is going to make a regulation around those requirements. The minister is also going to make a regulation under paragraph 7 of subsection (1) that may provide that some classes of benefits are mandatory and must be provided to people who are eligible and other classes of benefits are discretionary. The minister, all by herself, not prescribed, and that is a serious issue because there is no process that is involved in that, and it can change very, very rapidly.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I know this is a very complicated and important piece of legislation and I would hope that members of the House would be present to hear the debate, so I would like you to ask if there is a quorum present.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Is there a quorum present?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I really find it passing strange that with a piece of legislation that this minister has clearly said is one of the pieces this government is most proud of, someone who is actually dealing with the legislation and going through what the real areas of concern are can't even get a quorum from government members.

**1600**

The minister on her own, with no reference to cabinet, can make a decision about what classes of benefits are mandatory and what must be provided to those who are eligible and what are discretionary. That is a very serious issue, because what is required is an element of certainty in terms of a basic support plan. It's really important that people have an idea in the legislation, so that at least it requires some discussion before we change what is discretionary and what is mandatory, not leave it up to a minister, any minister.

Subsection (6) provides for the ability of the minister to determine periods of ineligibility for assistance with respect to failure to comply with or meet different conditions of eligibility and with respect to repeated failures to comply. Again, it seemed to me that that was given to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, but this is specific under paragraph 17 of subsection (1). So it appears that under that subsection and that paragraph the minister has particular abilities to make regulation. Similarly, under (6) the minister "may provide for a period of ineligibility as a result of a person's conviction of an offence or crime in relation to the receipt of social assistance."

If the issue here is to try and provide deterrents for fraud, and certainly this government has made a very big deal out of the necessity to prevent fraud, surely the range of periods of ineligibility should be right in the act so people know that you're serious about this, not left up to regulation. One of the issues we faced again and again in talking about social assistance reform was this issue about how the rules change from day to day. How can you be sure what is what? The confusion around what is the right thing to do, what is the wrong thing to do, is exactly what has been pinpointed again and again by advocates, because the rules can change. When the minister makes the rules, as opposed to even the Lieutenant Governor in Council when they're gazetted, it is even more serious; it's a movable feast.

The minister makes provision for regulations under paragraph 43 of subsection (1) in terms of first nation regulations, and "A provision in a regulation made under paragraph 43, subsection (1) prevails over a provision in this act if the regulation so provides." Does that mean that for native people this act means a totally different thing than it does for the rest of the citizens of this province? It certainly sounds like it to me.

The minister, for purposes of this act and the regulations, has the ability to make a regulation to "give an entity designated as a delivery agent powers for the purposes of this act and, if it does so, that regulation prevails over provisions in or under any other act that might limit those powers." In other words, the minister has the ability to make a regulation, and that regulation prevails over any other act or any other regulation. It sounds pretty arbitrary to me.

The minister may make a regulation under this section that "may be general or particular in its application." In

other words, it's quite possible for a minister to make a regulation that wouldn't apply to everyone or wouldn't apply in every similar circumstance but could apply just to a particular circumstance — again an element of arbitrariness.

"Retroactive effect

"(11) A regulation made under this section is, if it so provides, effective with respect to a period before it is filed."

In other words, the minister, having been informed about a situation that she doesn't like, can change the rule and in the rule make it retroactive to apply to something that wasn't an offence or wasn't in place before. What kind of due process is that?

Despite that section on retroactivity, it says that "no provision in a regulation that imposes a penalty or sanction or decreases assistance may be retroactive." That's a relief. That means the individual recipient can't be disadvantaged by that, but what about the delivery agents? What about this issue around the minister being able to determine what the area is and what happens in terms of retroactivity? I don't know, and we won't find out.

Those are the regulating powers. It's very serious that this is under the general social assistance provisions. But one of the things this minister is saying is that this act is different because it's going to create a very special circumstance for the disabled, is going to improve the lot of the disabled, is going to make sure that those who are already experiencing real difficulty in our society, who are really disadvantaged because of the barriers their particular disability presents in terms of their ability to live successfully and independently in the community, to be a contributing member of the community — those regulations apply similarly to the disabled.

The whole issue about the lien on the house: The minister made a big deal about how parents of disabled children will be able to be sure that their child is more secure. Certainly there's an improvement in the level of assets, or a promise of an improvement in the level of assets, that can be willed to a child in terms of trust funds, in terms of the ability for parents to assist with assistive devices or to assist in terms of quality of life. Yes, there is in this act some provision for that, and that has been asked for for a long time by the disabled themselves, by their parents, by their advocates. That is good.

But the provision is still here, in the Ontario disability support program, for liens to be against a home for a payback of benefits when someone is able to reimburse the system, for a requirement for assignment of other benefits. That creates uncertainty around what it really means in terms of being an adequate provision for the disabled.

Probably the most serious issue, from my perspective as the parent of a disabled child, is that the entire schedule B, the entire thing, when it talks about employment supports — remember, this is a very important part of this whole section in terms of making things better for those with disabilities, that there are going to be employment supports; the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act is being revoked and there are going to be employment supports for the disabled.

What do we find? We're not seeing employment supports for the disabled for anything but competitive employment. Yes, there are disabled people who are able to engage in competitive employment, sometimes full-time for most of their career lives, and yes, they need these supports to assist them. But the vast majority of disabled people, either at some point in their time or forever, are unable to compete in what is normally defined as competitive employment. They need ongoing supports to compete in employment.

We know that's true. Any of you who have talked to community living associations, any of you who have talked to those who work with acquired brain injury people, they will tell you that people are able to work, are able to contribute a bit to their own support. But the likelihood of their being able to work in competitive employment, being able to be as productive as someone without a disability, is very questionable.

**1610**

One of the reasons there has been so much concern around the vocational rehabilitation program as it exists today — and the minister is right that it has not necessarily been a particularly successful program — has been that it wasn't necessarily focused on the way to help people work to the extent of their ability within the community.

We know in many of our communities there have been great controversies over whether the kinds of projects in sheltered workshops, for example, are really helping people gain the skills that can take them to the next stage of employment or whether people are being exploited, because when they become good at a particular bit of work, they're kept there because they're more productive than some of the folks who need the experience. We know there has been a lot of concern about that.

This act is talking about competitive employment. It says it again and again. It says nothing about supportive employment, it says "competitive" employment. I would say to the members opposite that I don't think that's your intention. I think you need to be really careful around this. We all have examples in our constituencies of people who can participate in employment but not necessarily compete with others who don't have those disabilities. We need to be aware that if we're changing this whole program, we may be making it impossible for those people to be as productive as they are even today, and that would be a real concern.

We have a program in London called the leads program, which is a supportive employment program where people are given job coaching. One of the experiences there is that when you find someone a job, you find an employer who is willing to have that person on the job and you job-coach that person, in many cases they will be able to become adequately productive to maintain that job for a while, but they may need a little refresher course as time goes on in terms of that job coaching.

Will this provide for that? Advocates for the disabled are afraid it does not. They are afraid this is going to be like a one-shot deal. One of the realities for disabled people is that very often their abilities fluctuate with the state of their health, with the state of stress upon them, with many other aspects of life that may make them more able to work at one point than they are at others.

It is a great comfort to someone like me, whose child has multiple sclerosis, to have a program in place that recognizes the cyclical nature of that disease and other diseases. We know there are times in a person's life when they're able to work, sometimes even work competitively, and other times in their life when they become unable to work and their income may end very abruptly. The same is true for people, for example, who have hepatitis C or who have AIDS or even those who have some kinds of work-related injuries, some who have acquired brain injuries.

Those fluctuations are anticipated to be looked after in this bill, and that's good in terms of basic income support. That's the best part of this bill for those of us who worry about that cyclical nature, worry about the constant having to go and get reassessed, not necessarily by somebody who is an expert in the field. The ability to become registered, to have a very clear assurance that should you have no income, you have a recourse that's very quick and that you're not going to go through a period of extended stress right when you're not well enough to deal with it, that is a very good part of this bill. But it is not clear to those of us who are familiar with that kind of cyclical situation whether, as people go through those cycles, they're always going to be able to access assistance to competitive employment as they come in and out of those cycles and what that would mean.

How does that actually work? Is it assistive devices in terms of the workplace? Does it assist the employer to adjust the workplace? Does it include transportation? Does it include the provision for people to be able to take medications at work? That is something that often gets forgotten. Is it something that will enable people to have a flexible work time rather than be forced into a schedule that doesn't enable them to be competitive? Those are all questions that are here. I'd like to hear a bit of information from the government. I know when we go out to hearings you will be getting a lot of questions about what that means in terms of employment supports.

If it simply means a very small range of supports, as it often has done in the past under vocational rehabilitation, you won't have resolved the problems for a lot of people. Particularly with the difficulties the disabled are finding around transportation, with the cutbacks in the transportation that is available to them, the issue around transportation is particularly important to them.

I find it difficult to think that, given the way this government talks about social assistance recipients and the suspicion with which they are regarded and the assumption that everyone who is on the system is prepared at every moment to defraud the system, the same regulations about identification for those who are disabled apply as apply to those who are supposedly on short-term assistance, for a short period of time. That is a very difficult thing for people to swallow as part of something that is being touted to help people not to feel dependent and not to feel as though they are being stigmatized for needing assistance to live within our communities.

It is also very distressing for people to have the provisions in this act that I mentioned before, that at any given time someone administering the system could determine that they're unable to look after their own money.

Those of you who have sat on the justice committee around the Substitute Decisions Act, who have been through that whole issue around health care consent, know how important it is to disabled people to be seen to be able to make their own decisions to the extent possible. We have provisions in the statutes of Ontario when people are judged to be incapable by those who are able to make that determination. If someone is judged under the Substitute Decisions Act to be incapable of making financial decisions, there is a process. The public guardian and trustee has the ability to look after that person if there is nobody in their immediate family or nobody they've named to be able to look after their affairs.

For people who struggle with mental disability, with physical disability, who struggle with cognitive disability, one of the most important elements of independence, one of the most important parts of being a part of the community is to gradually gain the experience and the ability to make those decisions. For those who have never had an impairment that would cloud their judgement, whose bodies may not be able to do all the things you or I could do, to have the prospect that someone else could decide that they're incapable of managing their money is very offensive indeed.

I would suggest to you that this whole area needs to be rethought. There is no due process here. I know many fine people who administer social assistance now, but I would not want them to make a determination around whether I or someone I loved was capable of looking after their money. The very hallmark of independence is for people to have that ability unless they are deemed to be incapable by someone who can actually make that determination based on some form of expertise.

**1620**

I certainly don't think the municipalities anticipate that the administrator of their social programs is going to be somebody who has the kind of qualifications to determine incapacity as it's suggested in all of our other provisions. Why would you leave the door open to the kind of abuses that could happen under this system, abuses not only of the determination of incapacity but of who is going to look after that person's money?

For those of you who have read the report of Ernie Lightman talking about the hostel system, talking about what happens to homeless people who have to rely on the hostel system where their cheque is handed over to the hostels and the hostels, frankly, hold them hostage in some cases — not all, because there are some fine places — he detailed great evidence of abuses under that system.

This provision of enabling an administrator of a program to determine that a person is incapable and then assigning someone to look after their money is a prescription for exploitation like no other I have ever seen. When people have disabilities, they are often very, very vulnerable to exploitation. The reason we have advocates for those who are cognitively impaired in many agencies across the province, a system of people who advocate on their behalf, is because of the way in which people regularly take advantage of those people. There are reasons why we have provisions to try and protect people from those who would be predatory.

I have an example: one of my constituents, a person who is looked after by the public guardian and trustee, a person who has been deemed to be incapable by all the regular processes that we have under our statutes. Even with the public guardian and trustee looking after his affairs, he had a landlord who told him that he would lose his housing if he didn't pay first and last months' rent. Of course, the public guardian and trustee had already paid first and last months' rent, paid the landlord every month. This poor soul, out of the allowance he was allowed every week, was paying a huge amount of money to that landlord out of fear that he would be evicted, and doing it because he didn't know that the person didn't have a right to that. We got that straightened out and he now understands exactly how that works.

But under this, because this person has very serious problems, if a social service administrator were to determine by themselves that this person couldn't look after the money and the person wasn't under the public guardian and trustee and the money was paid to the landlord and the landlord was handing out the allowance, you know that the situation would have been much worse. This opens the door to that. I urge you very strenuously not to allow those provisions to stand in this act.

One of the principles behind the whole idea of providing programs of social assistance is to try and make sure that we can provide for the basic rights of every individual. We do that not just out of the goodness of our hearts, although I'm sure some people see that as the overriding reason. We also do it to keep order in our society. We know, from the experience of other nations, some not so far away, that if you leave people without any way of living at even a subsistence level, you put them in the position of having absolutely no tie to the community, and therefore no sense of responsibility around following the rules of the community.

Social assistance didn't come into place with the changes in the Poor Law in Britain because everybody who made those changes was a "bleeding heart," I believe some of the neo-cons would call it. It came into place because it made social sense. It kept our communities safer. It cut down on the kind of subsistence crime that happens when people do not have even a basic way of maintaining themselves, of maintaining life.

I happen to be one of the bleeding hearts. I happen to think that in our society we ought to have a value for all of our fellow citizens and that one of those values should be that we don't believe people should be homeless, that we don't believe people should be starving, that we believe those who are unfortunate are not to blame for their own misfortune and that part of our job as a community is to reach out in a caring way to those folks.

That doesn't mean you don't reach out in a way that helps that person to become more independent. I think that's very important and that's a value I would clearly share. But even if I were the most cynical person in the world, even if I really did think that those who are very poor are to be blamed for being poor, that those who are disabled are somehow to be blamed for their inability to be independent, even if I were that kind of person, I would want a system of social assistance for my own safety, because when you make people desperate, they act desperately.

Let's not in any way misunderstand the importance to the social fabric, to the maintaining of a decent and safe community, of having a system of social assistance that prevents people from being homeless, from being so hungry that they will do anything to get the next bite. Let's be very clear about our own self-interest as communities in ensuring that we have a decent program.

Let's be very clear that when we are making the kind of massive changes this act is putting in place, one of the ways we can protect our communities best is by making the rules very transparent so that we all know. One of the hot buttons that Conservatives played in the last election and kept pushing in the last election was this notion that most people on social assistance don't deserve the help, that somehow they're leeches on our communities and their misfortune is their own fault. Very successful for you for a while. Very successful.

Everybody who knows about the hotlines that were set up to report welfare fraud knows that for most of the calls that came in, the people answering the hotline had to explain to the people calling in saying someone was cheating the system that: "No, that's not true. That is the way the system is. This person is not cheating the system."

**1630**

The general population does not understand the complication of the regulations. One of the things that really distresses me is that this is the chance, the chance that was pointed out in all of the social assistance reform to make this transparent not just to recipients, but to all of us. Who is eligible? Should it be left up to regulation? Should the minister, even if it is left up to regulation, suddenly be able to change that regulation in particular or general cases? I don't think so. I don't think that's smart. I think what is smart is trying to work with providers of services, recipients of services, with the municipalities that are going to be administering this, with advocates and legal counsel who work with folks to actually set down exactly who is eligible, under what circumstances, what they need to do to prove that eligibility and how those decisions are carried out.

To have everything in this bill so up in the air, so subject to regulation, so arbitrary, is not only a problem for someone who might be a recipient but is a problem for all

of us. When someone comes to us in our constituency office complaining about a problem around social assistance, we won't have the answers. We won't know what the rules are. We won't know in fact whether this person is being unfairly treated. What is more, it simply gives the rise to this ongoing "them and us" kind of situation where assumptions about what is appropriate, what is legal, can be very far from the reality of what is appropriate and legal.

One of the issues you will hear a lot about as we go around the province — and I would like to emphasize how absolutely essential it is that we go around this province and have a lot of input into this from our municipalities, from our so-called municipal partners, from those who are recipients, from those who are advocates, from those who are taxpayers, is to air very thoroughly this whole change in the system. It could be a very positive experience in terms of creating a much more responsible community: responsible recipients, responsible taxpayers and responsible delivery agents.

If, as the minister suggested, this is a very important, key piece of legislation for your government, you want it to be the best it can be. It is going to be extremely important for you to listen to those who have experience with the system: those who have delivered services, those who have received services, those who are policymakers and certainly those who are taxpayers. It's going to be really important to give a lot of opportunity for consultation.

I sincerely hope that you will hear a lot of suggestions about how to make this legislation better than it is: how to make it clearer, how to make it more transparent, how to make it possible for people to be part of the system in whichever part they happen to have a role and know what the system is all about.

When you make massive change like this, it takes a long time for people to pull away from some of the old assumptions, some of the old ways that things happen, and having very thorough committee meetings, having an ability to have a dialogue about what is intended, what is here, what could improve it is extremely important.

You know, and you will hear from a lot of our members, why we disagree with the mandatory workfare provisions in here. We believe from our experience that the vast majority of people who are recipients of social assistance would give their eye teeth to be able to earn a living to maintain themselves and their families. We believe very strongly that when you provide programs on a voluntary basis to people, they flock to them. We know that because we provided some of those programs. We provided programs that were consistently oversubscribed by people who were just dying to get back to work, wanting to contribute, wanting to be taxpayers, quite frankly. We could never accommodate all the people who voluntarily wanted to participate in those programs.

You have decided to make them mandatory, and what are you finding? You can't provide it either. We know the figures from the various areas. You are not able to provide anywhere near what you were supposed to be able to provide by this time of the year. You know that the figures show very clearly that the delivery of mandatory workfare is far from the predictions you made. Part of the reason is that you have to build acceptance of those communities that are going to be providing that work, and because you've insisted on making it mandatory, many of the community participant agents that you anticipated would come on board are reluctant, not because they don't want the assistance of people, but because they fundamentally disagree with having that participation mandatory rather than voluntary.

Having run a community agency, I can tell you that the number of people who want to volunteer in most community agencies is often far, far greater than can ever be managed in terms of the learning process, in terms of the supervision process. I really believe that many people who are on social assistance want to participate in programs. You don't have to make it mandatory, you don't have to lay up a situation where you make penalties, because if you're providing those situations, the carrot of having that independence is quite sufficient.

You know we disagree with the mandatory nature, not with the intention, not with the acceptance within the community of people but with the element of mandatory. We don't think it's necessary and we think it will eventually destroy the program you've put in place.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I'd like to compliment the member for London Centre for, as usual, her in-depth analysis of the bill. I also compliment her for her compassion because I know she feels very seriously about these issues. But I really struggle with her sky-is-falling attitude towards it. She has gone through the bill piece by piece and picked out every conceivable terribly bad misinterpretation she could possibly imagine, and in some cases she's made some serious misinterpretations. Let me talk about a couple of examples.

She implied our intention is that if somebody would move off social assistance and get a job, we would expect them to repay the benefits they had gained while they were on social assistance. That is absolutely not the case. It is not our intention and nowhere does the act indicate that is our intention.

She also talked about our desire to have all rent moneys paid directly to the landlord on behalf of people who are on social assistance. Again that is absolutely not our intention. But I'm sure she would accept the fact that if a person who is receiving social assistance benefits has a history of not being able to pay their rent or of not being able to pay their utilities, the landlord has the right to receive the rent, and if the recipient of the benefits was incapable of responsibly paying the rent, that somebody should step in and intercede.

Those are just a couple of examples of her interpretation of what we're saying being absolutely, totally at odds with what the bill says and what our intention is. While I again compliment her for having studied it and tried to understand what is in it, I wish she could somehow have a

more positive attitude about our compassion and our intentions.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Member for London Centre, you can sum up.

**Mrs Boyd:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. When you make legislation, you make it in such a way that it can be applied by any subsequent government. I wasn't calling into account just your compassion. I'm saying it's not right for any subsequent government to be able to make regulations. This should be laid out in a way that requires us to make changes through the legislative process, not in cabinet, not in the minister's office. I would say to you that when I talk about the necessity for transparency and clarity, it's with the clear knowledge that you will not always be government, we will not always be government, they will not always be government, and that a piece of legislation that we all expect will survive for a number of years should not be so dependent on the whim of the government of the day. I've said that again and again.

**1640**

The examples I used were examples out of committee hearings with your own party. There is no indication of when an administrator — listen to section 17:

"(1) An administrator may appoint a person to act for a recipient if there is no guardian of property or trustee for the recipient and the administrator is satisfied that,

"(a) the recipient is using or is likely to use his or her assistance in a way that is not for the benefit of a member of the benefit unit."

How that's determined is up to the minister. Where's the due process in that? What I'm saying is, why don't we say what we're saying? If someone fails to pay their rent for three months in a row and they're in receipt of assistance, they are deemed not to be using that money in the right way and then a certain number of things may follow, not that an administrator can make that determination.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Carroll:** It's my pleasure to rise today to participate in the debate on Bill 142. My comments today will deal almost exclusively with the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, that part of Bill 142.

As the minister outlined earlier, a new legislative framework to provide income support and employment support for people with disabilities is required. People with disabilities do not belong in the welfare system. They require a different type of support than Ontario Works recipients. We recognized this in the Common Sense Revolution and we promised to create a new income support program. Consistent with people's expectations of this government, we are delivering on that commitment.

Moreover, people with disabilities have advised us that support programs must focus on their specific needs. They have told us they're tired of governments studying their needs instead of addressing them. They have told us that barriers to employment left in place by a succession of governments must be removed. The proposed act is designed to establish a program that answers these needs.

We have consulted extensively with people with disabilities and we've relied on their advice to help develop this program. While this new proposed plan must effectively serve people with disabilities who require assistance, it must also be accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario. It must provide both income supports and employment supports to those who are eligible and it must recognize that all of us — government, communities, families and individuals — share the responsibility for providing these supports.

The act has five parts. Part I addresses income supports and eligibility. It contains the proposed rules for governing the application process, who qualifies and who does not, who receives financial support, how it is to be paid, and the terms and conditions and procedures for recovery of overpayments, should they occur.

Part II deals with the effective date of income support decisions, internal reviews and appeals. An internal review process will be the first recourse for any disputes. Appeals will be heard by the proposed new Social Benefits Tribunal.

Part III defines eligibility for employment supports. This will be a new system, replacing the current vocational rehabilitation services program. Ministry-approved service coordinators will deliver these supports.

Part IV of the act is administrative, establishing that the ministry will continue to deliver income support to persons with disabilities and defining the authority of the director in the program. It also provides the legislative authority for the ministry to contract with service coordinators to deliver the employment supports that are essential to the program. Part IV also indicates the government's intent that the costs associated with the new program will be shared between the province and the municipalities.

Part V is a general part granting powers to take affidavits, establish regulations and make agreements with other jurisdictions. This section establishes rules respecting confidentiality of information and privacy. It also contains provision for assistance, according to regulations, for persons who incur extraordinary costs providing care to a child with a severe disability.

Ontario Works is a program of temporary assistance to move people into or back into the workforce. Its objective is the shortest route to a paying job. It requires people to participate in mandatory activities to achieve that goal.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Speaking of mandatory participation, I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Chatham-Kent.

**Mr Carroll:** It would be a shame if anybody missed all this information.

I was saying before I was interrupted that while the Ontario Works program has a requirement for mandatory work participation, the Ontario disability support program, on the other hand, has no mandatory requirement for employment-related activities as a condition of income

support. Supports to employment, however, will be available to those who want to work, but participation will be completely voluntary.

The Ontario Disability Support Program Act is based on the recognition that Ontarians with disabilities have unique and different needs that are often long-term and either ongoing or intermittent. The new program creates a clearer definition of "disability," one that eliminates the term "permanently unemployable" and the stigma associated with it. People with disabilities have told us very clearly that they resent that label.

The fact is that many people with disabilities desire work and are able to work, either regularly or intermittently. What they need is secure income support and employment support, employment support that includes flexibility, incentives and ready access. Disabilities are different. People are different. The new program recognizes these differences. We intend to shift the focus from disabilities to abilities, because the latter exist in large quantities. The old system focused on what a person could not do. The new system is built around what a person can do.

The new disability criteria will focus on substantial physical or mental impairments that are continuous or recurrent and expected to last at least a year or more. Under the proposed legislation, people will be eligible for support if the direct and cumulative effect of their disability results in a substantial restriction in the activities of daily living. The activities of daily living that will be considered include personal care, functioning in the community and functioning in the workplace. We believe these criteria will provide a much more practical and workable definition than the current one.

It's important to note at this time, as the minister made clear in her announcement of the new program on June 5, that people who are currently eligible for disability benefits under the family benefits program will have those benefits protected. This will occur when the new legislation comes into force and there will be no retesting of their disability.

**1650**

While eligibility rules are important, the way they are interpreted and implemented is critical in determining whether a program like this is fair and reasonable. The government is proposing a number of important improvements in this area. Under the new system, the forms will contain the right questions. They will be filled out by professionals who understand disabilities. They will be clear and consistent with all relevant aspects of the program. The workers who are responsible for applying the disability criteria will be given the training and tools that are essential for a fair assessment of each disability.

In the current family benefits program, some people with disabilities face periodic reassessment even though there is only a very remote chance that their condition has improved. People with disabilities have told us this practice does not make sense; it wastes resources and is demeaning in cases where the disability is serious and permanent. The new program will end this practice. Once people are proven to have a disability, they will only be retested if and when the disability is expected to improve. Those with a permanent serious disability will not be retested.

This act also introduces much more flexible and generous eligibility rules relating to assets and financial supports provided by families of people with disabilities. All of these changes are aimed at recognizing the unique costs faced by the people with disabilities and are intended to support their independence. As the minister noted earlier, these changes recognize that family members and others have an interest in improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

The 25% copayment for the Ministry of Health's assistive devices program will be abolished for clients of the Ontario disability support program and of the handicapped children's benefit. The Ontario disability support program has a limit on cashable assets and that will be increased from the current limit of $3,000 to $5,000 for a single person and from $5,000 to $7,500 for a couple. An additional $500 will continue to be added to the limit for each additional dependant.

People with disabilities will in future be able to retain up to $100,000 in compensation awards received for injuries, for pain and suffering or resulting from being a victim of crime or abuse. The current limit for such awards is only $25,000.

There will be an ability to retain life insurance up to a cash surrender value of $100,000 to cover the costs of advanced stages of serious illnesses. The new program will make it easier for families and others to help people with disabilities with the costs of assistive devices, health items, support services, home accommodations, and education at any time.

Families and others will be able to provide an additional $4,000 annually towards any other costs through a gift or inheritance. For the first time, families will be able to contribute financially to improve the quality of life in the community, including shelter.

The amount that families and others can leave in an inheritance for people in the program without penalty will be increased from $65,000 to $100,000. To enable families to build up a trust for a family member with disabilities, interest on trust capital can be retained in the trust until the capital reaches $100,000. After that level has been reached, the interest can be used to cover allowable expenses. These improvements to inheritance rules will also apply to discretionary trusts.

A better system of income support is only part of the answer. People with disabilities have told us that they also need and want employment supports. They want the barriers that prevent them from gaining employment removed. The current vocational rehabilitation services program is not meeting these needs. It's often patronizing and certainly outdated in its approach. The new system of employment supports is based on what people with disabilities have told us they need. It will focus directly on jobs and provide quick access to services, it will get rid of long and repetitive assessments and it will provide tech-

nological aids that people can take with them from one job to the next.

The new program also makes another improvement in the treatment of people with disabilities who are making the transition to employment. It takes the risk out of trying to work. People with disabilities have pointed out to us that the current system actually contains a powerful disincentive to work. If the job doesn't work out, the person with disabilities must reapply for benefits and typically face a long waiting period before their disability benefits are restored. This disincentive does nothing to support self-sufficiency and independence. In fact, it is entirely counterproductive and unfair.

The new program would quickly reinstate income support if the job does not work out. Taken together, the changes in vision by the Ontario Disability Support Program Act would give people with disabilities what they have been asking for. It replaces an outdated and limited welfare approach with secure income support. Instead of focusing on endless assessments and measurements of disabilities, it emphasizes abilities and results. It replaces poorly defined eligibility rules with clear and reasonable criteria. Instead of labelling people as permanently unemployable, it recognizes that many people with disabilities can work and want to work and provides employment supports and incentives towards achieving that objective. It will enable people with disabilities to benefit more from gifts and inheritance by allowing families to contribute to a more secure future for their adult children.

With these changes, this government is keeping its commitment to create a separate support system for people with disabilities that is compassionate, comprehensive and effective.

The minister and I have each made reference to the principles that lie behind the Ontario disability support program, the regulations to be developed under them and the programs that will result. As the Legislature commences its consideration of this proposed new program, it is our hope that members keep these principles before them as they consider the legislative details.

In the last election campaign, our government's platform was entitle the Common Sense Revolution. It was a pledge to bring common sense back to the making and managing of public policy, public programs and public resources. The fact that it constituted a revolution was more than anything else a judgment on how desperately overdue a commonsense approach was. This proposed disability support program was designed using that yardstick. Any suggested refinements to it and to the regulations that will follow will be carefully considered with those same criteria. Throughout the debate, we look forward to all members assessing the program and any changes from any quarter with these commonsense criteria: Is it fair to all the people the program is designed to serve? Is it fair to the taxpayers? Is there accountability? Are there consistent standards balanced by flexibility? Does it provide productive results?

Given that this bill is based on what people with disabilities told us they wanted, I have no doubt that if passed by this House the new Ontario disability support program will give people with disabilities better control over their lives, will give them more personal control and choice over supports to employment and will focus on what people can and want to do, and it will provide better opportunities for independence.

For all these reasons, I have no hesitation in recommending this bill to the favourable consideration of all members.

**1700**

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Boyd:** Indeed the member from Chatham, as is his job as a government member, has pointed out all the most positive aspects of that particular section. That's his job. My job is to point out to him where some of those things are not quite as clear-cut as he would like to say.

He talked about section 4, which talks about eligibility. Indeed the broad grounds of eligibility he talked about are there in section 4, except that subsection (3) of that says, "A determination under this section shall be made by a person appointed by the director." So that determination is going to be made.

Under the regulation-making part, under subsection 54(1):

"The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

"1. prescribing the persons to be included in a benefit unit;...

"9. respecting the conditions of eligibility for income support including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing,

"(i) additional conditions relating to eligibility for income support."

In other words, what is in the bill, which sounds like a wonderful outline, indeed very close to what disabled groups have been asking for in terms of eligibility for ongoing income support, this government and any subsequent government has the right, under regulation-making power, to add conditions to that eligibility. That's what people are worried about.

The regulation-making power allows a lien against property, allows for the ministry to require assignment of income, assignment of any other things. So it is not quite as clear-cut as you would think, because so much, again, relies on regulation, and that's where the worry is. We want it included in a clear-cut way within the legislation itself, not left up to the whim of your government, our government, their government, any other government. Regulations get changed immediately without discussion.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Chatham-Kent's remarks. I want to compliment the member on being very hardworking and dedicated to helping the minister and to listening to input on this important piece of legislation, Bill 142.

I want to set the record straight that the constituents of my riding of Durham East have made it very clear that they support a return-to-work process for people as long as it's fair. This is for able-bodied people to return to work, and I believe the Ontario Works program is some-

thing the voters of Ontario want. It was in our election platform and it's something we're going to work towards providing.

When it comes to the whole issue of welfare, I think there are all kinds of signals on social assistance.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** That's not what the member talked about.

**Mr O'Toole:** It was.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr O'Toole:** The member had a couple of points which I think should be made to assist him in a supplementary.

The third party actually is acting like the official opposition here. When Gerard Kennedy, the Liberal candidate, was running for the leadership, he was asked a question by a panellist, Matt Maychak, as to whether he would raise taxes. Mr Kennedy's response was, "If that's what it takes to restore the welfare rates to previous levels." Kennedy is on record that raising welfare rates through increased taxes is their plan. I'm reading from the Toronto Star, May 19, 1996.

**Ms Lankin:** He talked about the disability program.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order.

**Mr O'Toole:** In the few remaining seconds I have left, I think all parties want to see that able-bodied participants have the right to work and that they need to have the opportunity to go back to work, yet people with disabilities shouldn't be stigmatized, and I think that's what our minister has tried to do.

I encourage the member for Chatham-Kent to conclude and I'm sure the remarks will be on the record.

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member for Chatham-Kent. I will have an opportunity to address the bill a little bit later this afternoon, but in particular, I'm glad he took the time to focus on the disability support program, which is a very important part of this overall bill. When I am speaking this afternoon, I will also address that. I have a great many problems with the other section of the bill, but in general terms I'm very supportive of the measures that are being taken under the Ontario disability support program.

Like the member for London Centre, I have concerns in certain areas. We've been speaking extensively with people in the disability community and there are areas that need improvement, and I think we will be able to address that in debate and hopefully in committee and through amendments.

The overall thrust of this, which is to set up a separate income support program, one that recognizes the need for flexibility for persons with disabilities to be able to move into the system and out of the system as work opportunities become available, one that increases the limits with respect to cashable assets and trust funds and other sorts of things and really allows for a sense of independence is absolutely headed in the right direction.

There are significant problems with the definition and the ability in regulations to change that, there are problems with the ability to apply liens, and I think there are problems with some of the sections around informal trustees and the ease with which someone could be declared to be incapable of taking care of their own affairs. So there are areas that I think we should address.

I also think that the thrust on competitive employment is shortsighted and doesn't fully understand the needs of all the disabled community. There's a large part of the disabled community that will be able to benefit from that; there are others who can't.

Within that purview, I want to say to the member that I agree largely with his remarks. I think the problems that are here we can fix together.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I know in questions and comments that we are supposed to comment on the guest speaker, as it were, but I can't help but make the comment that the member for Beaches-Woodbine has shown what frankly she has often shown in this House: that she does have the class and the dignity to commend the government when there is room, in her opinion, to do that. It is refreshing when that happens because it happens in all honesty. When she was saying that she appreciates most of the aspects of the bill, especially dealing with the changes for people with disabilities, the member for London Centre was nodding her head at the same time.

As a member who has been in this House a long time with both these members, I personally appreciate it, as a member of the government, when they stand in this House and compliment the government for the legislation that is before us this afternoon, even to the extent of saying that some of the areas they have concerns about possibly or probably — I don't want to paraphrase incorrectly — can be addressed.

That's what positive representation is about in this chamber no matter which side of the chamber we sit in. I think whoever the government of the day is, when we can make decisions jointly and improve government legislation from time to time, again no matter who the government is, that is the most positive process of Parliament, and I'm very pleased to be part of it this afternoon.

**Mr Carroll:** I'd like to thank the members for London Centre, Durham East, Beaches-Woodbine and Mississauga South for their compliments. I thought for a minute there that the member for Beaches-Woodbine was going to give us unqualified support, but I do appreciate her positive comments because I think this particular area, and probably many areas, is one where it's important that we all work together to get it right. I've had an opportunity to work with the member for Beaches-Woodbine before in committees and I'm sure we will meet again as we discuss this bill further.

I do want to clear up the thing about liens. There has been some conversation about them. The primary residence of anybody who is on the Ontario disability support program, the proposed new plan, will not be subject to any liens. Where we're talking about a lien is if there is an investment beyond that in a second property or whatever that we currently expect to be sold. If it is not sold, then the ability will exist for a lien to be attached to it. I want

everybody to understand that we have absolutely no intention of attaching any liens to the primary residence of a person who is on the Ontario disability support plan. That would not be fair, we don't believe it's fair and we don't intend to do that. I feel pretty comfortable in saying that.

**1710**

**Ms Lankin:** Hopefully you'll be comfortable in supporting amendments and —

**Mr Carroll:** I guess maybe it's subject to interpretation.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate. It's been kind of a love-in here, these last few comments from the ladies in the assembly, and I must say I sincerely appreciate that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 142. I'll start with an aspect of the bill that hasn't been discussed too much here this afternoon, and that is what I think is a fundamental mistake the government is making in putting an increasing portion of our social services on property tax. I think that's a fundamental mistake, and that's what this bill does, as you know. It adds dramatically to the portion covered from property tax.

I keep reminding myself that the government appointed a handpicked group to look at how services should be distributed between the province and the municipalities and how they should be funded. When that group got word that the government was planning to load 100% of social housing on to property tax and a substantial portion of social assistance on to property tax, these were their words: "The panel strongly opposes such a move. We are unanimous in the view that if there's a choice between placing education or health and welfare on the property tax, it's clearly preferable to continue to rely on the property tax for the funding of education."

I and my party have a fundamental disagreement with the government on the direction it's heading here. As a matter of fact, I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs on a radio show the other day acknowledging — I'm paraphrasing here but I think I'm correct. He said he believes that income redistribution programs should not be on property tax but should be handled by income tax. In other words, income redistribution, such as our social assistance program, should not be on property tax. The interviewer was astute enough to say: "Wait a minute. If you believe that, you're doing the opposite. You're taking social assistance programs off being supported by income tax and you're putting it on to property tax." The minister himself acknowledges that it's a mistake. I think perhaps the worst mistake you're making is in putting 100% of social housing on property tax.

I say to the property taxpayers in Ontario, this is a mistake. It is a big mistake and a fundamental mistake, putting our sensitive social programs on to property tax. I will say without any question that the government in 1998 has decided to cut $666 million of support it is providing in 1997. It's gone, 100% gone in 1998. You are adding $666 million right on to the property taxes.

I raise that because this bill puts an enormous additional cost on to property tax. The minister himself says income redistribution programs should not be on property taxes. I would say part of the plan here is that 100% of social housing — and I remind you that over half of social housing is seniors' housing. That is whom we are putting at risk here.

**Mrs Marland:** I think you're on the wrong bill.

**Mr Phillips:** The member says I'm on the wrong bill, but I'm not because this is part of the government's plan to put on to property taxes a substantial extra cost.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** That is not a fact.

**Mr Phillips:** The member says — and I like this, because the public should listen — that's not a fact. The minister the other day said, "Yes, we've cut $666 million out of" —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** He said that. He said, "But we told them we were going to do it so that makes it okay."

I would say that's problem number one with this bill. The Who Does What Panel selected by Premier Harris said they strongly oppose this, and they are unanimous in the view. That's quite an accomplishment. I think there were 14 people on that committee, all handpicked by Premier Harris.

The second thing I would say is that we are asking our municipalities to take over responsibility for this at the very time when the government has imposed chaos on them, in this respect: First, there will be the most massive change in property tax we've ever seen in Ontario next February-March. I guarantee you it is going to be a mess. Small businesses are going to see their taxes go up substantially. There are going to be, obviously, a lot of properties whose taxes go up; property taxes go down on other properties. The point is, that's the first thing that is going to happen within municipalities: a very chaotic situation on property taxes.

Second, the government has said, "We are going to load on to you a whole bunch of new services." I laugh when the Premier says, "They asked for this; we gave them what they asked for." I'll tell you, the municipalities said, "Don't give us social housing."

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: With the greatest of respect to the member who has the floor — and I know you're listening very carefully — I'm wondering if in your opinion he is speaking to the bill that is before us at this time.

**The Acting Speaker:** I am listening carefully to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I would like to hear him speak a little bit more closely to the content of the bill we're on today. I'm sure you're getting there.

**Mr Phillips:** I actually believe I was there in that a prominent part of this bill is to shift on to municipalities an enormous extra cost. In fact the government itself says that the extra cost for municipalities will be $853 million. That's brand-new costs as a result of this bill. I'm pointing out that this bill —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** The member may say, "What bill number?" Schedule A. You are establishing the mechanism for the special benefits tribunal; giving the minister "the power to designate geographic areas in Ontario and to designate a municipality or district social services administration board...to administer and provide administration...." The program is the $853-million program. They are directly related. I'm dealing with Bill 142, An Act to revise the law related to Social Assistance. It clearly is the act that will result in $853 million of new costs on the municipalities.

**1720**

Through this bill, you are asking municipalities to administer this program, a major part of it, at the same time as the government has decided that property tax changes will come in next February, March and April. You are asking municipalities to take funding for social housing. Here are all the new things they are going to be asked to take on. They are being asked, at the same time, to work with a new labour bill, when many municipalities have said, "This is going to cause a major disruption in our municipalities" — Bill 136. I might add that at the same time this is going on, the province has said that it is going to take over responsibility for funding school boards. The reason I raise this is that we cannot ignore that for this program to work, municipalities are going to have to devote enormous resources and energy and time and priorities. But it is typical I think of the government that at a time when you want them to be doing creative work in this area, most of them are going to be saddled with huge challenges on the property tax bill — and I think it's fair to raise that within the context of this — with huge challenges on social housing —

**Mr Preston:** That's not accurate.

**Mr Phillips:** The member over there says it's not accurate. I just say to him, I will challenge anyone to call in the municipalities to a legislative committee here and we will go over the numbers, and they'll tell you, as I might add the Premier said the other day, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, that "Yes, we're going to give them $666 million less next year." But we told them about that before. So the municipalities in this province are going to get $666 million less. The reason I raise this is, that is around 5% of their budget. I was interested to hear the government say not only that but that they expected municipalities to be able to reduce taxes in addition to that: "Across the province, property tax cuts should average 5% to 10%."

I just say to the Legislature, when you are cutting $666 million of support to them, you are asking them to take on all these new responsibilities. — and this bill adds substantial new responsibilities to municipalities — and you're asking them to take on the cost of social housing and to deal with what will be, there's no question about it, a chaotic environment around property taxes a year from now, or actually probably eight months from now. You are setting the stage for failure. I used to be in business. I have never seen any business try and run like this, where they are creating as much confusion and chaos as this government is.

I'd also say that one of the challenges in making this work is going to be on jobs. When Mike Harris became Premier, there were 499,000 people out of work in the province. We now are 25 months into the revolution; there are 486,000 people out of work in the province of Ontario. Yes, it has gone down. It has gone down by 13,000 people, but there are still almost 500,000 people out of work in the province and Mike Harris promised that by now we'd see 300,000 new jobs created.

**Mr Preston:** We're behind schedule.

**Mr Phillips:** We're behind schedule; the member has acknowledged that, 115,000 behind schedule. So I say, let's be cautious when we make comments about individuals who are on social assistance and cautious about saying things like, "Why don't they simply go out and get a job?" The fact is that in Ontario there are still roughly 500,000 people out of work, well over two years into the great revolution. There are still almost as many people out of work as when Mike Harris became Premier.

I might add that it's particularly tragic among our young people, and I've been saying that for some time. I remember a debate I had with the Premier, and he said: "Oh, your figures are all wrong. It's not a problem. Things are fine." Finally he has been forced to acknowledge that the employment problem among our young people is particularly acute, and I raise that because the objective of this program is to assist people to get the skills to move back into the labour force. I would just say we've never had an unemployment rate among young people in the province of Ontario as high as it is right now. It is the young people who are bearing the brunt of the revolution. They're not getting the 30% tax cut that the best off in the province are. I think it's fair to remind ourselves that the reason the government has cut support to municipalities, $666 million, is because it has got to fund its tax cut. But that doesn't go to our young people.

We saw earlier this week tuition fees going up 10% to our young people, dramatically more in some areas. So our young people are the ones that are bearing the brunt of the effects of the revolution, young people who can't get jobs. As I say, you can see the unemployment rate from January to July, the first seven months of 1997, is up dramatically over the same period a year ago: 18.3% this year, 15.9% last year. We've actually lost 24,000 jobs among our young people.

The reason I raise that is that you often hear the comment from people, "Well, those individuals on social assistance simply need to get out and find themselves a job." It's not that easy, as I think most people in the Legislature know. All of us have, in our offices, individuals who would love to find a job but just simply can't.

I wanted to raise the job issue because in the last few months, while there has been job creation in the province, the government still, after 25 months, has achieved about 55% of its target of 300,000 jobs, and it's particularly acute among our young people.

If the success of the Ontario Works program is dependent on the government delivering on its promise of 725,000 jobs, I will tell you right now, the government is way behind its target, and I might add that when the government ran the election, it was very specific. It wasn't, "We hope this plan will create jobs." It was, "This plan will create more than 725,000 new jobs over the next five years." I just say right now, you're way behind the target, and particularly among our young people — way behind the target.

The fundamental, though, that has to be challenged here is whether it is right to put on to property tax these sensitive social services. Our party says no. Al Leach, if you get a transcript of the radio interview I heard, agrees it's wrong. He said that, in his mind, income redistribution programs, and this is an income redistribution program, should not be on property tax. It should be on income tax. I'm repeating myself, but the interviewer wisely said, "But you're doing the opposite." He said, "Well, yeah, but it takes a while for us to get there." Well, it takes a lot longer to get somewhere if you're heading in the wrong direction, and you're heading in the wrong direction. I could understand saying, "Well, it takes a while to get there," but you turned and went the other way.

The reason I raise this is, we are inviting, for people who will be affected by this law, an environment where, as we face difficult economic times, and we will, the province inevitably will because we go through cycles, you can just see at the councils the enormous emotional problem we'll have when seniors who rely now 100% on property taxes for their housing are at the council meetings, when individuals who rely on social assistance are at the council meetings, and when property taxpayers, many of whom would be facing difficult times, are at those meetings, you've got this intolerable conflict.

**1730**

We have a problem with the fundamental premise of the bill of saying, "Let's move an increasing share on to property tax." We think the government would have been far wiser to listen to the advice of its own group headed up by David Crombie, who said: "It's wrong. We strongly oppose this and we urge the government to reconsider."

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Boyd:** It's always a pleasure to comment on the remarks of the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. One of the things that he consistently does is talk about a bill that's in front of the Legislature in the context of what it means with respect to whatever else the government is doing.

There were several members who were saying he hasn't talked about the bill. In fact, he did talk about the bill, because a good part of the bill is talking about this partnership between delivery agents. The delivery agents are going to be the municipalities, and the entire thrust of what he is talking about in his speech is what it means when you download the responsibility for delivering this kind of program on to the municipality while at the same time the other kinds of downloads are happening and while at the same time within the program of the government we are seeing many, many additional costs also being assigned to the municipalities. He is quite right to be apprehensive about how well this program will work, being delivered by municipalities under the kinds of conditions that municipalities are facing with all the new programs for which they're going to be fiscally responsible but also administratively responsible.

His point is well taken. It is an aspect of this bill that needs to be taken into account. It is indeed included in the bill that these funding arrangements and these administrative arrangements are being given permission in this bill. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who is experienced at being able to analyse what the fiscal consequences of government actions may be, is quite right to point out his apprehension about the fiscal responsibility in this bill.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** It's interesting to listen again to the refrain of the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, especially about the portion of Bill 142 where he alleges administrative chaos when it comes to the reform of assessment and the realignment of responsibilities between the senior and local levels of government. May I remind him that it was his party that brought in the land speculation tax along with a whole pile of other taxes during the 1980s.

Another reminder needs to put on the record. If we do not make some of the fundamental reforms in assessment that are required, it would seem to me that the party across the way, the official opposition, has become a champion of unfairness and discrimination when it comes to assessment reform. It seems to be perfectly acceptable to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt to have the existing status quo of built-in tax inequities that we have in Metropolitan Toronto and that this government is finally addressing. Granted there are going to be some major shifts, and I already see them in my own area, but to stand across the way and accept the old status quo is completely unacceptable. Finally we have a government that has come to grips with all the accumulation of inaction on the part of the forces across the way, particularly the Liberal Party, when it comes to this point.

Finally, I'd like to address the issue of jobs. When we look at the record of the Common Sense Revolution and the point that he continues to make over 25 months, somehow or other it has not penetrated his particular brain waves that government does not create jobs except in a very direct way for the jobs they hire such as in local government. So this member is completely out of place when it comes to that.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I listened to the comments of the member for Scarborough-Agincourt very attentively and I find that indeed he threw a challenge to the members of the government who are here today. I know the minister is here and he also listened to some sections attentively.

He is simply saying, is it true what was said on the radio program? Has the minister indeed said, "Should income redistribution programs not be shifted on to the property tax base?" — and I know the minister right now

is mumbling something under his breath, and all the members on the government side have listened very carefully to the comments made by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt — and if it is true that that was the case, is the minister willing to stand in his place today and say: "Hold on, we'll go slow on this. We made a mistake"? If he says he's made a mistake, then maybe, just maybe, there should be a withdrawal of this bill so that the minister can make his comments fairly, succinctly and clearly to the public of Ontario.

The minister is here today. He's got a chance to speak. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt has his next two minutes now to wrap up the discussion, and certainly the members who right now are sitting in the back bench of this government have a chance not only to mumble under their breath whether income redistribution programs should not be shifted on to the property tax base, they have a chance also to address themselves. But what I hear suddenly is that the members of the government side are getting up and are not addressing that major point. We have the radio clip —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further questions and comments.

**Mr Wildman:** As the member said, we have the radio clips.

I want to congratulate my friend from Scarborough-Agincourt for his presentation which, as always, was thoughtful and analytical and quite evenhanded in putting it forward. He concentrated on two areas, as I was listening to him. One was the downloading on to the municipalities and what effects this is going to have in terms of their ability to deliver programs without significant increases in costs and property taxes or cuts in services.

The other area that he concentrated on was jobs and what effect this has in terms of employment. He pointed out quite correctly that the Premier, when he was running for election prior to 1995, promised jobs. He said there were going to be 725,000 new jobs created in Ontario by the next election; that is, over four to five years, there would be 725,000 new jobs.

Now we have government backbenchers getting up and saying, "Wait a minute now, the opposition is being unfair when they say that because they should understand that governments don't create jobs." Well, when the voters went to the polls last time around, they had a leader of the Conservative Party saying he was going to create jobs, and he hasn't been up to schedule. We had other backbenchers saying, "Well, there's going to be a real drive in the last stretch," that they're really going to pick it up in the last stretch. So we have a division of opinion within the Conservative caucus. Some say they don't create jobs, it's none of their business to create jobs. Others say, "Oh yes, we're going to really speed it up on the job creation market towards the end of the session."

The fact is this legislation doesn't create any employment. It just means more poverty for people in the province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

**Mr Phillips:** I appreciate the comments of the members for London Centre, Etobicoke-Rexdale, Parkdale and Algoma.

I couldn't understand the anger of the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale because it wasn't me that said, "This plan will create more than 725,000 new jobs over the next five years." It was Mike Harris. I don't know whether the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale's memory is failing him, but he ran on that. The document was clear: It will create them, not, "We hope the economy will," but this plan was going to do it. I just say to the government members that you're way behind on the targets, particularly among our young people.

**1740**

I will just go on to reinforce what the member for London Centre talked about, and that is, let's recognize the environment within which this will fall in 1998. Our municipalities are going through a very chaotic period of time. I love it when what the Conservatives always say, "We run things like a business." That has become a joke. We have the only toll road in North America that has no tolls. Today we heard about the only prison with no prisoners. Now we find, running it like a business, that the government is imposing chaos.

You are dooming yourself to failure by imposing this the way it is on municipalities at a time when they are, first, having difficulty coping with the degree of change, and last, I would say that surely you accept that you are making a mistake. As Minister Leach said, these programs shouldn't be on property tax. They should be on income taxes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Lankin:** I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak to this bill.

I would like to begin with an observation about how bills are brought forward in the House. You've often heard members in the opposition complain about omnibus legislation or combined legislation or legislation that composes a number of very different areas together in one bill. I would like to put to you that Bill 142 is a very good example of that, if I may. The long title of the bill is An Act to revise the law related to Social Assistance by enacting — and now we get to the two parts — the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act — and then it goes on and repeals sections of other acts and there are consequential amendments to other acts.

The Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act are two very different pieces of legislation. I will find myself in quite a quandary when it comes to dealing with this bill in committee and/or through votes, because I can tell you I am vehemently opposed to some of the elements contained in the Ontario Works Act. I personally just think it's very wrongheaded and I don't think it's going to solve the problem the government would like to solve.

On the other hand, I'm generally supportive of the Ontario Disability Support Program Act. There are areas where I would like to work with the government to see amendments, because I think that there are some particular

concerns that can be addressed and they are fixable, but these are two different pieces of legislation.

I'm not going to take a long time on this point. I only draw it to the government members' attention because you often treat our criticism of this with disdain and you think it's just whining on the opposition benches. I think here is a very good example where I have profound differences with the government with respect to one act and significant support for the government with respect to the other. When it comes to a vote — I guess under the new rules I could abstain — I will find myself having to vote against it because of the Ontario Works Act and how profoundly opposed I am to that, yet I am in support of a vast portion of the other bill.

I wish the government would give consideration to splitting these two bills so they could be dealt with in an appropriate fashion. Also at committee, when people come forward to make presentations, it's going to be a real mishmash. I think the committee will have a hard time dealing with it. Enough said on that topic. It's just a point that I wanted to make.

If I could respond to a comment the member for Chatham-Kent made earlier when he was wrapping up after questions and responses, he said he almost thought the member for Beaches-Woodbine was going to give unqualified support. It won't have been recorded in Hansard, but I called out across the floor to him, Madam Chair, which I know is out of order, and said, "If you deserved unqualified support, you'd have it from me," and that is the truth.

I don't want anyone to misconstrue my comments tonight when I speak to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, because I am going to keep my comments to that section of the bill. It's where I think I can contribute and try and make some improvements. When I speak in favour of this, I do not want any member of the government benches to stand up at another point in time and say, "The member for Beaches-Woodbine supports Bill 142." I support one half, one act. You have two acts here. I support one act under Bill 142.

I'm saying this in particular to some of the members who are here tonight because I've heard over the last couple of nights in debate, particularly around the City of Toronto Act, Bill 148, the member for Scarborough Centre say on a number of occasions that the member for Riverdale in this House, one of my colleagues on this side of the House, Madam Chair, you, had said it was a simple bill.

**Mr Wildman:** A member with whom she is very familiar.

**Ms Lankin:** A member with whom I am very familiar. He quoted you a number of times, saying that you said it was a simple bill. He never completed the sentence, in which you said it was a simple bill which could have — I'm paraphrasing — disastrous consequences on the communities of Metropolitan Toronto. That is not fair debate, my friend. I'm hoping that people will listen to the comments I make in support and the concerns I raise.

I have said in general that I am completely supportive of the thrust of what the government has announced this bill is about. The minister in her announcement, and the member for Chatham-Kent this afternoon in his recital of the government's position on this bill, set out some things which I think are headed in the right direction and are very positive for members of the disabled community. In fact, when the minister made her announcement in the House that this bill was coming, I think my words were that this has the potential of being one of the most positive and —

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker —

**Ms Lankin:** You can't correct someone else's record, Dan.

**Mr Newman:** I just wanted to point out to you, Speaker, that the member for Beaches-Woodbine said I'd made some comments and I might want to bring to her attention —

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, but you can't do that in a point of order. You can't correct the record. You will have an opportunity —

**Mr Newman:** — that she said this bill will have some consequences.

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat, please. You cannot correct a record in the middle of debate. You will have an opportunity in questions and comments. The member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Lankin:** I'll help the member. He tried to put on the record from Hansard the comments of the member for Riverdale in which she said, "It is a simple bill," but that it may have consequences. That's the point. The last two days in this House he's been standing up suggesting that the member for Riverdale simply said, "It's a simple bill." What I'm saying is, be full in your quotes. If you are attributing something to another member across the floor and attempting to twist the reality to suggest that the member is somehow supportive of what the government is doing, when she clearly wasn't on that bill, that is not fair debate, my friend.

**Mr Wildman:** It could be a simple bill and simply be wrong.

**Ms Lankin:** A simple bill which is simply wrong.

I want to speak about the bill that is before us, however, and the section of it dealing with members of the disabled community. I think at the time the minister made her announcement I said I thought it had the potential of being one of the most positive programs or developments for persons with disabilities in Ontario that we'd seen for a long time. I repeat that. But I have to caution the government members that much of what we heard from the member for Chatham-Kent tonight, while I agree with the thrust of what he's saying and I hope that's what we accomplish, is not what is actually in the legislation. So if we can go through this, maybe there are some areas where we can strengthen the wording of the legislation to actually achieve what you have indicated is the intent of the government, and where we can do that together, I would say hallelujah and congratulations to us all, because we're

making an important contribution to persons with disabilities in our community.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't think there's a quorum here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present.

**The Acting Speaker:** Call in the members.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**1750**

**Ms Lankin:** I keep feeling every time I get a flow going here somehow or other it gets interrupted. I'm not sure where I was. I think what I was trying to point out, and I am particularly addressing my comments to the member for Chatham-Kent because I hope we will be able to work together on this, is that much of what he indicated in his speech was the intent of the government is not contained within the legislation.

I will make some very specific comments about the areas in which I have concerns. With a shorter speaking time and a complex bill, it is hard to get a lot of this on the record, specifically with respect to the definition of "disability." I appreciate the improvement in the definition over what the minister had originally contemplated. The wording now says the person is considered disabled if "the person has a substantial physical or mental impairment that is continuous or recurrent and expected to last one year or more." Then it goes on to talk about the direct and cumulative effect of impairment on a person's ability to attend to personal care and daily living activities, and it talks about the duration of the impairment and the restriction in a person's activity of daily life.

The other thing the members must be very cognizant of, however — I believe this section should be deleted from the legislation — under subsection 54(1), the regulation-making powers of the legislation, subparagraph (i) of paragraph 9: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council," which essentially is the cabinet — the cabinet makes the —

*Interjection.*

**Ms Lankin:** I'm not sure what we have going on here.

**Mr Curling:** I'm trying to check if there's a quorum.

**Ms Lankin:** You're trying to check if there's a quorum. I think there's a quorum and I'll continue with my comments.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Scarborough North, come to order.

**Ms Lankin:** I'd like to talk to the members on the government bench in debating a bill which I think is important and serious, which I primarily support and in which I think there are problems, and I'm urging you to give consideration to particular amendments. Specifically, I've laid out what the definition of "eligibility" is. The definition in and of itself is one that I think is very supportable. There may be some problems in terms of how it is implemented, and we will have to deal with that at the time.

Under subparagraph (i) of paragraph 9 of subsection 54(1), it allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council — and I was making the point that that's essentially cabinet — to prescribe regulations "respecting the conditions of eligibility for income support...without limiting the generality of the foregoing additional conditions relating to eligibility for income support."

There are very serious concerns. I don't know if you remember when the ministry first came out with its draft definition. The disabled community was outraged. All credit to the minister and the ministry in that there was a change. The wording that's here now is much more acceptable; it's much fairer.

But under regulations you can have "additional conditions relating to eligibility for income support" — why is that necessary under regulations? That leaves it much too open, and this group of people, as we know, is much too vulnerable to have this kind of insecurity. I would suggest maybe that's an area we could consider deleting, or at least I'd like to understand why the government feels it's necessary to have that in there.

The other thing, and I think you might respond very negatively to me when I put this forward initially because I can imagine what might be in your minds; Under the definition of eligibility for disability an exception has been set out in subsection (2): "A person is not a person with a disability if the person's impairment is caused by the presence in the person's body of alcohol, a drug or some other chemically active substance that the person has ingested unless the alcohol, drug or other substance has been authorized by prescription as provided for in the regulations.'

I think the intent here is that someone said, "We don't want to treat people better under a program which is designed for legitimately disabled people if they're just a druggie," or something like that. But there are people, and I know this from the time when I was in the health ministry. I also had responsibility for the anti-drug strategy, and there are people who are truly disabled by their addiction and who require medical support and help. I'll give you an example.

It was quite controversial at the time, but we were doing something I think in breaking ground in Ontario in responding to the need to try and help heroin addicts get off heroin. We launched into the provision of methadone treatment. It was very controversial, but it actually has a proven track record of helping people reclaim their lives and be able to go back to a productive life.

I suppose my concerns might be able to be addressed if somehow or other maybe someone gets a medical certificate that indicates this is what they're ingesting and somehow there's a regulation that allows for that drug, but I don't see it actually working very well.

I think that there is a real danger here that what might be an understandable, punitive approach for someone who has taken steps which have put themselves in a position of being disabled through intoxication of drugs, alcohol or

whatever, but that someone who has a really disabling addiction and is trying to work back from that may not be able to get the income support they require during that period of time. So that's an area that I would like us to look at and examine if there is a way of addressing that.

The member for Chatham-Kent indicated that I should not be worried in the concern I raised about liens because it was not the government's intention to place liens on any primary property and that it would only be additional property assets or whatever. I indicated that was not in the legislation and he said it's a matter of interpretation.

I point out to you that under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act — section 7 is the section dealing with lien on property — it says, "The director shall in prescribed circumstances, as a condition of eligibility, require a recipient or a dependant who owns or has an interest in property to consent to the ministry having a lien against the property, in accordance with the regulations."

Then if you look to section 54, which I pointed out is the regulation-making section, under paragraph 54(1)12, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which is the cabinet, has the power to set out regulations "respecting the powers of the director with respect to a lien and the process for securing and discharging a lien."

I would say to the member for Chatham-Kent that there is nowhere in the legislation where what you told us in this House is set out. It's not set out that a lien could only be put on a primary property. It may be that that's the government's intent and it may be that you've seen the regulations that the rest of us haven't, or at least that the ministry has communicated to you that that's what they intend to have in regulations, but this is —

**Mr Wildman:** Published them.

**Ms Lankin:** The member for Algoma indicates it would be helpful if the regulations were published so we could debate them in accordance with or at the same time as the legislation, and I agree with that, but more to the point with respect to the disabled community and with respect to a bill whose thrust is to try and ensure independence, control over their own lives, an ability to have the income support and the employment supports to move out into employment, where possible, to receive the income support when needed, all of which I support, I would think if it truly is your intention, you would give the disabled community the assurance that that's what it is and not leave that in regulations. It's easy enough. Under section 7, that could be spelled out in the bill.

I've looked through this three times and I cannot find any reference to what you've said. It's possible that I've missed that and maybe you can show me if I've missed that, but I think this has been left to regulations and it's an area that we should probably address.

There are many areas I would like to talk about. Here's one that I think is really important. Under section 12 of the legislation, "The director may appoint a person to act for a recipient if there is no guardian of property or trustee for that recipient and the director is satisfied that,

"(a) the recipient is using or likely to use his or her income support in a way that is not for the benefit of..." that recipient,

"(b) the recipient is incapacitated or is incapable of handling his or her affairs."

I am shocked at this because there is nothing in here which specifies how the director will come to that determination. And it goes further, to allow that when the director has come to that determination, they could give the benefits to a third person or a person who is acting as a recipient.

We have a whole process in terms of the Substitute Decisions Act and a whole process that people have to go through in order to be determined to be incapable and a whole process of appeal for those people. It's been set out in legislation to guarantee rights for vulnerable persons and disabled persons, yet in this legislation we simply say the director can make this decision.

This is very serious. It has to be tied to some other process like the Substitute Decisions Act, some other legal process for determination of incapacity. You cannot have a director or a bureaucrat simply making this decision and providing benefits to someone else in a very patronizing way.

The member for Chatham-Kent, when he was talking about vocational rehab, said it was very patronizing and said, "We want to move away from that for the disabled community." Then you can't support a provision as patronizing as this which allows a single bureaucrat within the bureaucracy to determine the incapacity of an individual and give their benefits to a third-party recipient on their behalf. I'm saying to the member for Chatham-Kent, you must look at how you tie section 12 to the Substitute Decisions Act and other legal forms of determination of incapacity.

There is much that I would like to say about this but I have 30 seconds left, with the new rules which restrict time. When you have a serious bill with a lot to talk about, you can see that it doesn't allow members to have a full discussion.

If this bill were separated from the Ontario Works bill, I would vote in favour of this and I would work very hard with you to amend some sections that I think are problematic. This bill is headed in the right direction. If you can work together with members of the opposition, I think together we can do something positive for persons with disabilities in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Because it's almost 6 o'clock, we'll be doing questions and comments when this bill next comes before the House.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Minister without portfolio, I believe you have the business for next week.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** Yes, I have the weekly business statement.

Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of September 1, 1997.

On Tuesday, September 2, afternoon sitting, beginning second reading of Bill 152, Services Improvement Act, and in the evening sitting, between 6:30 and 9:30, continuing second reading of Bill 142, Social Assistance Reform Act.

On Wednesday, September 3, afternoon sitting, beginning second reading of Bill 149, Fair Municipal Finance Act (No. 2), and in the evening sitting, continuing second reading of Bill 152, Services Improvement Act.

That gets us to Thursday, September 4. The morning sitting is of course private members' public business, ballot items 93 and 94, and in the afternoon sitting, continuing second reading of Bill 149, Fair Municipal Finance Act, 1997 (No. 2).

**The Acting Speaker:** It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Tuesday.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

# CONTENTS

## Thursday 28 August 1997


### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Ontario health insurance plan**, private member's notice of motion number 65, *Mr Ford*
Mr Ford ..... 11609, 11616
Mr Miclash ..... 11610
Mr Laughren ..... 11611
Mr Boushy ..... 11612
Mr Cordiano ..... 11612
Mr Hudak ..... 11613
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11615
Ms Churley ..... 11615
Agreed to ..... 11624

**United Empire Loyalists' Day Act, 1997,** Bill 150, *Mr Danford*
Mr Danford ..... 11616, 11623
Mr Michael Brown ..... 11618
Mr Martin ..... 11619
Mr Parker ..... 11620
Mr Wildman ..... 11622
Mr Flaherty ..... 11622
Mr Hudak ..... 11623
Agreed to ..... 11624

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Ukrainian Independence Day**
Mr Ruprecht ..... 11624
Mr Shea ..... 11626

**Gasoline prices**
Mr Wildman ..... 11624

**Acquired brain injuries**
Mr Hudak ..... 11625

**World Francophone Games**
Mr Patten ..... 11625

**Sexual assault crisis centre**
Ms Churley ..... 11625

**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Lalonde ..... 11626

**Blood system**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11626

**Violence against women**
Mr Carroll ..... 11626

### FIRST READINGS

**Lansing Co-operative Nursery School Act, 1997**, Bill Pr88, *Mr Turnbull*
Agreed to ..... 11627

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Water and sewer services**
Mr Sterling ..... 11627
Mr Agostino ..... 11628
Ms Churley ..... 11628

**Gasoline prices**
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11627
Mr Phillips ..... 11628
Mr Martin ..... 11629

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Young offenders**
Mr Ramsay ..... 11629
Mr Runciman ..... 11629, 11632
Mr Hampton ..... 11632

**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Agostino ..... 11630
Mr Sterling ..... 11630

**Ontario Hydro**
Mr Hampton ..... 11631
Mr Sterling ..... 11631

**Education**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11633
Mr Snobelen ..... 11633

**Long-term care**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11634
Mr Wilson ..... 11634, 11636
Ms Martel ..... 11636

**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Stewart ..... 11635
Mr Leach ..... 11635

**Gasoline prices**
Mr Miclash ..... 11635
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11635

**Wine industry**
Mr Maves ..... 11637
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11637

**Public housing**
Mr Duncan ..... 11637
Mr Leach ..... 11637

### PETITIONS

**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11538

**Non-instructional school employees**
Ms Lankin ..... 11638

**Vehicle registration fees**
Mr Michael Brown ..... 11638
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11639

**Ipperwash Provincial Park**
Mr Wildman ..... 11638

**Blood system**
Mrs Boyd ..... 11639

### SECOND READINGS

**Social Assistance Reform Act, 1997,** Bill 142, *Mrs Ecker*
Mrs Boyd ..... 11639, 11650, 11652 11656
Mr Carroll ..... 11649, 11650, 11653
Mr O'Toole ..... 11652
Ms Lankin ..... 11653, 11657
Mrs Marland ..... 11653
Mr Phillips ..... 11654, 11657
Mr Hastings ..... 11656
Mr Ruprecht ..... 11656
Mr Wildman ..... 11657
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11660

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Committee report**
The Speaker ..... 11627

**Business of the House**
Mr Sampson ..... 11660


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Jeudi 28 août 1997


### AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT ES DÉPUTÉS

**Loi de 1997 sur le jour des Loyalistes de l'Empire-Uni,** projet de loi 150, *M. Danford*
Adoptée ..... 11624

### DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

**Jeux de la francophonie**
M. Patten ..... 11625

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la réforme de l'aide sociale,** projet de loi 142, *M^me^ Ecker*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11639

A 2 ON
Y1
-1223

Government
Publications

No. 222A

Nº 222A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Tuesday 2 September 1997**

**Mardi 2 septembre 1997**

SEP 3 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 September 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 septembre 1997

*The House met at 1331.*
*Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** This past week, a municipal restructuring commissioner sent in by Mike Harris and Al Leach told a packed crowd at the Jellicoe community hall that the towns of Beardmore, Geraldton, Longlac, Nakina and 25 other townships surrounding them would cease to exist as of January 1, 1998. In their place will be one new municipality called Greenstone, a municipality larger than many countries and one that will have but one mayor and eight councillors to represent this extraordinarily vast area.

It's difficult to know what the greater insult is. Is it that the municipality spent so much time over the past several months working with the commissioner on devising an upper-tier form of government only to have it rejected out of hand by Commissioner Gray, because it's now clear that was never an option for this government; or is it that the government seems intent on stamping out the identity of communities in our part of the province whose history and survival should be celebrated, rather than scorned?

The fact is, this forced amalgamation is part of the government's master plan to further reduce the voice of northerners. By taking away the northern support grant, they seem intent on actually killing some of our northern communities. Now, by reducing the number of municipalities, they hope to further still our voice.

I would advise the Premier of one thing today. Yes, you can change our names and reduce our numbers, but you will be accountable at some point in the not-too-distant future. I can tell you, the people of northern Ontario and Beardmore, Geraldton, Longlac, Nakina and all the townships will neither forgive nor will they forget.

### LABOUR DAY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** The Latin-American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez says this:

"Our view of the past must not be impelled by nostalgia but by hope. It is not a fixation on the painful and traumatic events of the past, but rather a concern about contemporary poverty and a conviction that only a people which has retained its memory can change its situation and build a better world."

I had the privilege yesterday of marching in my community with a large number of men and women who remembered yesterday the contribution that the organized labour movement has made to the quality of life of communities like Sault Ste Marie in Ontario and indeed in Canada over the years.

In the midst of the anger and frustration, I sensed, in talking to the folks I came in contact with a tremendous feeling of solidarity against a known enemy attacking them from every direction, not remembering the very valiant fights that were fought on the picket lines, the sacrifices that were made over the years by our forefathers and foremothers as they fought for health and safety conditions in the workplace, as they fought for better wages, as they fought for benefit packages that we all benefit from here.

I would say today to all those who marched in Labour Day parades yesterday —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### SECOND MARSH

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** It is with great pleasure that I rise to address the House regarding the Second Marsh wildlife area, situated at the east end of my riding of Oshawa.

The Second Marsh is a provincially significant wetland of about 123 hectares that is home to some 361 species of plants, 265 species of birds and 27 mammal species.

A Lake Ontario shoreline wetland, the Second Marsh is unique in that it is one of the few remaining wetlands adjacent to a sizeable urban centre. As an environmental habitat the Second Marsh plays a vital role in maintaining the ecological and environmental health in Oshawa. This urban wetland is a breeding habitat for wildlife, and contributes to nutrient storage, flood control and water purification.

The value of the Second Marsh to the community of Oshawa is evident in the recreational and educational opportunities it provides.

The Second Marsh wildlife area is a predominant area that was showcased to the judges for the National Communities in Bloom program. The marsh was a significant part of Oshawa's success in this program.

As a member of one of the member groups that contribute thousands of volunteer hours to the Second Marsh, I would like to recognize and congratulate the tremendous value the organizers and volunteers contribute to the Sec-

ond Marsh. Wetlands such as these not only contribute to our communities, but to our whole environment as well.

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Today a new school year began for 810,000 children who ride school buses in Ontario. For the past two years I've been working on a piece of legislation to protect those children. Bill 78 received the unanimous support of this Legislature almost a year ago. Bill 78 puts teeth in the law which is supposed to protect children. It gives the law a mechanism to gain convictions which cannot be made now.

Mr Palladini can crow all he wants about the new school bus safety measures in Bill 138. That is bull roar. Nobody is fooled. All he has done is raise the fines. If you can't get a conviction, it doesn't matter. Police do not have the resources to follow 16,000 buses around the province.

This morning a new school year started in Windsor. In the midst of all the government's media hype about the protection of increased fines comes a report of two vehicles in Windsor which blatantly passed a school bus.

The minister's bill is a failure. If it doesn't work on the first day of school, one of the few times when police can afford a safety blitz, when is it going to work? It leaves children at risk from speeding drivers. Eleven children have been killed and over 80 injured in the past 10 years by drivers who ignore the school bus warning lights.

The government must pass Bill 78 or introduce vehicle liability —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. I say to the member for Essex-Kent that I'm going to reserve on "bull roar," by the way. The member for Beaches Woodbine.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** We'll all quite look forward to that ruling, Mr Speaker.

## SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I rise today to state my very real concern about the recent announcements of cuts in the speech pathology program, and in particular the stuttering treatment program at the Clarke Institute. These cuts have been attributed directly to cuts in funding by the provincial government.

At a time when the provincial government has indicated its desire to invest in children's programs, one of those programs being an increase in money available for speech pathology, many of us who recognized that the need was so great and that money that was being reinvested after the cuts would do little to address the need, hoped however that it would stem the tide, that it would stem the haemorrhaging of the system, yet now we find the program at the Clarke has had to be cut as a result of cuts in the provincial funding.

It is a world-renowned program. The program there, particularly the part of the speech pathology program that deals with stuttering, has helped many people move from an impediment in their speech to being able to learn to speak, to operate in productive employment. It has been a godsend for many people.

This is an issue of disabilities, and a disability that can be overcome. I urge the government to take another look at this. We shouldn't lose this world-renowned program, this program that really helps people get over disabilities.

## AUTOSYSTEMS

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate the employees and management of Autosystems of Belleville. For the second year in a row, General Motors has recognized Autosystems as being "the best of the best" among its 30,000 parts suppliers, naming the company the best headlamp supplier in the world.

After 10 years in business and more than 10 million headlamps shipped, Autosystems has amassed several industry honours. Those honours included GM's Mark of Excellence award in July 1990, Ford's Q1 award in 1994, and more recently certification in the QS9000, an impressive industry standard set by the three major automakers.

President Don Warren said: "Since the first day of business, Autosystems has recognized that doing a first class job every day is critically important to success." That philosophy continues to pay dividends as the company has been awarded contracts for five more headlamps for various vehicles coming on line in the near future.

The success of Autosystems demonstrates that Quinte is a great place in which to do business. I would like to encourage other manufacturers to come to Quinte and to learn for themselves what Autosystems has learned, that we are the best in the world.

**1340**

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** With the recent breakout at the boot camp, I think it's time for the Harris government to re-evaluate some of its privatization initiatives.

I think they need to understand that companies, in order to make a profit, are going to shortchange some of the conditions inside a prison. Companies benefit from every dime not being spent and corrections is a very labour-intensive industry. Staff-inmate ratio, training and preparation of staff have an important role to play in determining the cost of institutionalization and the quality of life in the prison.

The pressures of the work with a hostile and manipulative clientele make Ontario jails challenging places to work, resulting in lower pay, less benefits, fewer and less qualified employees doing monotonous routines, which will only make matters worse.

In the Harris government's zeal to reinvent government, we should remember there is a great deal of difference between privatizing and contracting out the pickup of garbage and hiring a corporation to run a jail. The privati-

zation policy also promotes a failed crime control approach and subscribes to the idea that incarceration can win the war against crime.

What the Harris government needs to be talking about is the need to develop viable crime prevention policies. We tend to deal with the symptoms and not with the causes of crime, and the privatization debate impedes the development of alternatives to the prevailing correctional policies.

The major challenge is to reinvent corrections as a public service and not as a private business.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** In the Common Sense Revolution the Conservative Party promised no new user fees, but beginning yesterday, September 1, northern motorists now are hit with a new vehicle registration fee: $37 to register a car, $21 to register a motorcycle and $2 more for registration of certain commercial vehicles. This is a new user fee, plain and simple.

The government has tried to argue that the fee is fair because the money will be used to improve northern highways. The government conveniently forgets that northerners already pay more because we pay at the pumps. We consistently pay more for gasoline than anywhere else in the province and that is why our NDP government removed the vehicle registration fee in northern Ontario.

If the government truly wants to improves northern highways it would take some of the $1.9 billion in new gas tax revenues it will receive this year and apply some of that to northern highways.

But to demonstrate how desperate the government is to pick the pockets of northerners, consider the case of Mazie McGlade, a constituent of mine. The new registration fee went into effect yesterday, September 1. Her birthday is on August 31. When she went to get her registration stickers on August 23, she was told she would have to pay the new fee because the office was closed on August 31. So even though the fee did not take effect until yesterday, she had to pay $74 for her two vehicles.

This is a money grab. The government should do the right thing: remove the registration fee in northern Ontario.

## TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Today thousands of classrooms throughout York region are empty when they should be filled with secondary school students beginning their new school year. They're empty because their teachers have been on strike, and for the past number of weeks students and their parents have lived with the uncertainty of whether classes would start or not.

Well, they didn't start today and that's not fair to students, it's not fair to their parents, and frankly it's not fair to the many teachers who would prefer to be teaching. It's also not fair to many single-parent families and families with two parents working who have to make other arrangements.

Fortunately, a tentative agreement has been reached and classes are scheduled to begin tomorrow. I am hopeful that this agreement will be ratified and that the education of York region secondary students can begin and continue uninterrupted.

I call on the Minister of Education to turn his attention to this very important issue and ensure that contract negotiations for the teaching profession are in future conducted within a more professional framework, a framework which will not involve the withdrawal of services from Ontario's students.

# INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (LICENCE SUSPENSIONS), 1997

## LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (SUSPENSIONS DE PERMIS)

Mr Grimmett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the suspension of drivers' licences / Projet de loi 154., Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les suspensions de permis de conduire.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Short comments?

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** If enacted, this bill would require the suspension of the motor vehicle licence of anyone convicted of impaired operation of a vessel. This is a very important issue in my riding. It will put drinking and boating on the same level as drinking and driving and it will place a major deterrent before anyone who is considering having a drink before they operate a boat.

## VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME COMMEMORATION WEEK ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 SUR LA SEMAINE DE COMMÉMORATION DE VICTIMES DE CRIMES DE VIOLENCE

Mr Baird moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act proclaiming Victims of Violent Crime Commemoration Week / Projet de loi 155, Loi proclamant la Semaine de commémoration des victimes de crimes de violence.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Any short comments?

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** This bill would commemorate the victims of violent crime and aims to foster awareness of victims' issues in our society and the reform of our criminal justice system.

## MOTIONS

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move that the Vice-Chair and the clerk of the public accounts committee be authorized to adjourn to Edmonton, Alberta, to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in September 1997.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I'm not sure that this is precisely a motion, but I believe we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence in memory of Diana, the Princess of Wales.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent for the House to observe a moment of silence as an expression of condolence over the passing of Princess Diana. Agreed? Agreed.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**1350**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. You have mercifully backed away from your intention to give students who are having learning difficulties large Fs for failure on their report cards. Instead you're going to give them an R, which you say will mean extensive remediation is needed. The problem is that your $533 million in cuts to education has already forced boards to cut back on their special education programs and to let go of remedial teachers.

You could provide some immediate reassurance that your talk on Friday about help for students with learning difficulties is not just part of your most recent public relations campaign. You could provide that reassurance by restoring the $533 million that you have already cut from the education budget so that special education programs and remedial support could be put back into the schools. Will you commit today to restoring the $533 million you have cut from education?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** The member for Fort William once again is poorly informed, and perhaps her staff have not done the proper research. I'm sure she must be embarrassed by continually standing in the House and providing information which is just blatantly wrong.

First, if the member opposite checks on the report card, she will find there is a box that is checked by a teacher when the student has a special need and when they are on an individual lesson plan. That's on the report card, and it's there obviously to reflect those special needs and those special circumstances.

If she checks, or has her staff check, she will find that not one cent has been reduced from special needs funding by this government — not ever, and won't ever be. If she checks again, she will find in the guidelines we have put out for the allocation model, which we are working on now, that we are committed to special funding for special needs students. We think that what has happened in the past with the general legislative grants program isn't sufficient for those special needs students, and that's why we're addressing it in particular.

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, I remind you of the question. The question was whether you were prepared to put back the money you took out of education. I gather the answer is no. I don't find that reassuring and I don't think parents or educators across the province will.

You are about to take over the entire responsibility for deciding how much money is going to be spent on education. There is a very real fear out there that your idea of what is fair and equal means taking every student down to a common denominator that will be far too low to meet the needs of any student, let alone a student with special needs, that it will be a financial bottom line that works for you and the Treasurer, for the provincial budget, but doesn't work for kids in a classroom.

In boards like Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor, to name just three, boards where they have been spending more to meet the needs of their students, your new funding model is going to mean, without question, larger class sizes, less special education and probably the loss of junior kindergarten.

You love to talk about excellence in education, but you are likely only going to be prepared to pay for average. Do you think average will be okay when it comes to keeping class sizes down or providing special education programs?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** The member for Fort William is just plain wrong. Everything that she has said in the last couple of minutes is exactly the opposite of what this government has been saying over two years, what all our actions are directed to. All of our directions are this: finding out what each individual student in this province needs for a first-class education and providing that funding. That's why we've done all the work we've done over the last year. That's why this government has taken the responsibility for funding education, so that each student in this province has an opportunity for a high-quality education, an opportunity that has been lacking in some cases

because your government failed to fix a broken funding system. We will.

**Mrs McLeod:** I suggest to you it's very difficult to make judgements about right and wrong when nobody has any idea what this minister or his government plan to do when they take over control of all education funding.

Minister, I suggest to you that since no one knows what you're actually going to do when you control the funding, we can only go on the basis of the evidence to date, and the evidence is very clear: It is all about cuts. It is about cuts to the funding for junior kindergarten, it is about cuts to the funding for adult education, it is about $533 million worth of cuts by your government alone and it is about boasting that you're going to be able to cut aid even more. That is the evidence. No wonder people are worried about what's going to happen to education when you're the only one left in charge.

I want to take you back to something your own consultants said a year ago. Ernst and Young said to you in the report you commissioned on the financing of education that before you try to come up with a new funding formula you need to get a better understanding of the reasons why some boards spend more than others. So, Minister, I ask you: Will you give those expert task forces you have set out the time they need to go and get a greater understanding of what the real needs of quality education would be and what they would cost, board by board, or are you prepared to settle for averages because they fit within your provincial budget?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Once again, the member is wrong. We have never said we would settle for averages; as a matter of fact, quite the opposite. We believe we have to identify the needs of individual students, something that has been lacking in the past, one of the reasons why some of our students in Ontario have been second-class students by virtue of the funding available to them. We will take care of that.

In addition to that, the expert panels are out there looking to see and quantify those costs on a geographical basis. We understand and we've said very clearly from the beginning that there are different costs in different parts of Ontario, that different students have different needs. That's why we're doing the hard work we're doing now, building on 16 months of work that was done by a committee that reported to us last year. We're building on that to get a better funding system.

What I can guarantee the member opposite is this: We will not sit on our hands. We will not watch as the funding system makes second-class students of some of our young people in Ontario. We will not do that, unlike your government.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the acting Premier. He will appreciate that there's growing concern across Ontario about the impact of the Harris government on 1998 property taxes. During a briefing with ministry officials, we have had it confirmed that the province, when it takes into consideration the elimination in 1998 of a $666-million municipal support grant program, is adding about $660 million of new costs on to property taxes. That's from the ministry officials.

At the same time the government has said to the taxpayers that they should expect property taxes will be cut, average 5% to 10%, over the next three years, taking into account that the province is adding about $660 million of extra costs to municipalities, is it still the Harris government's intention that property taxes will decrease 5% to 10% over the next three years?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** This government has said all along that the unconditional grants would disappear. The amount of money left in the unconditional grant is about $670 million. The province of Ontario said at the same time that the other transfer of authorities and the switching of funding, which in a general sense municipalities have been requesting for many years, would be revenue-neutral, and indeed that is the case. The transition teams composed of members of the government and of the municipalities continue to work on that issue, but there will be a revenue-neutrality in the rest of the switching.

It is the government's view that municipalities, with the ability now to be accountable for various services, to have the full responsibility for those services, will indeed be able to reduce the costs, just as the province has reduced costs, and not only will they accommodate that reduction of $670 million but have the opportunity for reduced taxes.

**1400**

**Mr Phillips:** I appreciate your confirming that they are going to be picking up another $660 million of costs.

The province now is a key player in setting the property tax rate, as you know. The province now will set about one third of the property tax rate, about a quarter on residential and half on businesses, so the question is obviously in people's minds. You've told municipalities that their property taxes should drop 5% to 10%. The province is going to set one third of the property taxes. So people are anxiously awaiting the government's answer. You've told the property taxpayers to expect a 5% to 10% decrease.

Is it the government's intention to reduce its property tax rate by 5% to 10% over the next three years?

**Hon David Johnson:** The portion of the property tax that the province will have control over pertains to education and the province will have that responsibility. Half of the cost of education will be funded by the province of Ontario and half of the cost of education will be determined through the property tax by the province of Ontario.

I think the evidence has been that Ontario is very concerned about the cost of government all across the board. Indeed, we have taken steps to reduce the cost of government through all ministries over the last couple of years, internally, the administration of the province. The complement of staff for the province has been reduced over the last couple of years. I think you can count on the province

of Ontario being very sensitive to the taxpayers of Ontario and making sure that they get the best value for their dollar.

**Mr Phillips:** Again, I will say to the public: The government has said property taxes are going to drop 5% to 10%. The province now is setting one third of the property tax rate. You have told municipalities to reduce theirs by 5% to 10%. We are expecting a commitment from you today to do the same thing or to acknowledge that you have misled the people.

I will go on to a supplementary on social housing, and that is, nobody believes that social housing should be put on property tax. Mike Harris handpicked 14 people to serve on the Who Does What committee and they unanimously said, "Don't do it." The municipalities said, "Don't do it." AMO said, "Don't do it." Mike Harris is fond of saying, "We did what the municipalities wanted." They said, "Don't do it, it's a huge mistake." You are dumping $900 million — and a majority of social housing is seniors. I say to the seniors of this province, the government of Ontario is abandoning you.

My question is this: Will you table today the study, any study that recommends that social housing should be put on to property tax?

**Hon David Johnson:** What I would say is that municipalities, for years and years, have been asking the province to sit down — through the Liberal government, through the NDP government, through this government — and to rationalize the services and the funding for various services that are shared between the province and the municipalities. It has been the municipalities' view — and municipalities have run a fairly tight ship over the years, much tighter than the province of Ontario over the years — they've said, "Look, if we can divide the services so that the municipalities are accountable for certain services and fund certain services, then it'll be more effective, more efficient for the taxpayer." That's exactly what we've done.

Earlier this year the association of municipalities and many of the mayors and councillors came forward with a formula and they said to the province of Ontario, "We're not 100% in favour of what you were doing earlier in the year, but here is a new formula that we're putting forward." The province has accepted that formula and that is the formula that's being put into place.

**Mr Phillips:** That's not true.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Scarborough-Agincourt, you can't say that.

**Mr Phillips:** What he said is not true.

**The Speaker:** No, we've determined that that is out of order.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I got kicked out for that.

**The Speaker:** I know.

**Mr Phillips:** I withdraw that, Speaker.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Today students across Ontario went back to school not knowing what the future holds for them this autumn. Many children have already experienced this government's cutbacks and know there are more to come. Some children couldn't start school this year because their junior kindergarten programs have been cut. Yet the minister persists in saying that he can get more for less.

The minister is continuing to swing the axe. He's forcing the closure of up to 12 schools in Ottawa and up to 20 schools in Toronto. Schools are continuing to lose special education assistants, speech pathologists, and students can't get the special needs help they need. Does the minister really believe that his new report card and his rewritten curriculum are going to make parents forget about overcrowded classrooms, closed schools, old and worn-out textbooks and materials and closed libraries?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** The member for Algoma has said many things in his question. As always, most of them are absolutely without truth, they are not —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** You can't say that. You must withdraw.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** All right, Mr Speaker. Let me say that they are not factually correct.

I can say this directly to his question: Yes, I expect that a standardized report card across the province that clearly indicates how a student is doing will help parents. And yes, I believe that a new, improved curriculum that spells out standards year by year by year will vastly improve the environment for teachers, for students and for parents, vastly improve it over your failed Common Curriculum. Yes, I believe that.

**Mr Wildman:** It's not just me or members of this House who are saying this. Last spring I toured Ontario's schools to hear about cutbacks at first hand and talked to administrators, teachers, parents, students, support workers. They made out report cards based on the new report card formula, although they gave the minister an F, mainly because they said he doesn't listen well.

I'll give you some examples: an Exeter parent who doesn't want her daughter continuing to be taught in the crowded classroom she had last year; a Kingston parent whose daughter has special needs and says the government's cuts are stripping her daughter of her opportunity to develop to her potential; a Port Dover student whose special education teacher was lost because of cuts. These stories are endless in these report cards.

When is the minister going to start listening and provide adequate funding to ensure quality education for all students in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'm pleased to report to the member for Algoma that we're not waiting, that we're doing that right now. We have expert panels working on what the correct amount of funding and the correct way of funding are to make sure that every student in the province has an excellent education.

I want to point out that, yes, classroom sizes grew while your government was in power, particularly as a result of the social contract. Yes, that's true. It's regrettable, but that's the deal your government cooked up with people during your term.

We think it's wrong. That's why we're moving to take control of funding, so we can make sure those services are available for students and to make sure those classrooms will be classrooms that the teachers can work in and students can learn in. That's what this government is doing.

**Mr Wildman:** How can the minister be so misinformed? I'm so disappointed in his response. I'm appalled by his ignorance. Perhaps the reason is that the minister only attends new school openings, like he did this morning in Mississauga, and doesn't go to many other schools in the province.

How about a grade 8 student in Cobourg who could not use a desk because there weren't enough in his classroom, or some classrooms where students had to stand because they were too crowded, or one school in London where a woodworking class ran out of wood halfway through the school year? These are serious problems that the minister has to address, and his rhetoric doesn't address it.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr Wildman:** Is the minister going to introduce a funding formula that will not pull out the rug from under thousands of students in Ontario, forcing more junior kindergarten program cuts, special education cuts, loss of psychologists, social workers, speech pathologists, technical programs, sports and other extracurricular activities? Will the minister prove me wrong by assuring everyone in Ontario that his funding formula won't lead to lowering everyone to the lowest common denominator —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Algoma.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** In direct response to the question from the member for Algoma, absolutely yes. We will be introducing a funding formula that will meet the needs of every student. That's our intention. That's why we're doing the hard work right now.

I can assure the member for Algoma that at the end of the day we will be moving forward to making sure that the students in Ontario take their rightful place at the head of the class and that student performance in Ontario is the best in Canada. That's what our objective is.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for High Park-Swansea, maybe you could finish this outside.

**1410**

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Gasoline prices across this province continue to be high following the long weekend. On Thursday of last week, your colleague the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations introduced a resolution on gas pricing, calling on the federal government to appoint a special investigator to review the gas price situation and to make recommendations. Yet just a week before, you told reporters, "It's not the purpose of this government to interfere in corporate actions." You defended the free enterprise system.

Minister, I believed you and that your words were the true reflection of this government's agenda. Last week's resolution was total hypocrisy, grandstanding at best. Will you prove me wrong and, in a show of good faith, commit to debate that resolution in this House this week?

The meeting of the ministers from across this country is happening September 10 and 11, and we don't have enough time, unless you agree to debate that resolution this week in this House, to do something with it.

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'd like to refer the question to Mr Tsubouchi.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I agree with the member that it's a great idea for us to get together and become unanimous on an issue that has a great impact on the people of Ontario. I think all of us agree that gas prices in the province are outrageous. I believe Mr Martin is sincere in what he's saying because of the area he represents, as are our members. We're all concerned with this.

I must say, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has indicated his concern with the issue in terms of contacting Mr Manley. I think it's important for all of us to debate this issue, to get on with it, to have unanimous consent. I agree with that.

However, what I would like to see is the House leaders from the opposition parties get together with our House leader so we can find the appropriate time prior to the conference, so we can take this unanimous agreement to defend the consumer of this province.

**Mr Martin:** Minister, you're the government. Let's schedule it.

People are angry about the high gas prices. It was particularly felt over this long weekend when many Ontarians travelled across this province. Now it's September, and while people are returning to school and work, they still have to pay those very high gas prices.

Your government tabled the resolution on gas pricing last Thursday aimed at the federal government. I agree that the federal government has a role, but I understand that Prince Edward Island has the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission, the regulating body that controls the price of petroleum in that province. Minister, Prince Edward Island has proven that the province has a role to play. Will you commit to a similar program to PEI's to control gas prices in this province and prove that you're sincere about wanting to take some action on this?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** First, I believe the member understands that it is with the consent of the House leaders that we arrange the schedule on many of these matters. We certainly want this to happen. I convey to the member that if you want this to happen, convey that message to your House leader so that when they get together we can have this resolution. It's extremely important.

With respect to the Prince Edward Island situation, it's going to be on September 10 that I will be speaking with my counterpart in PEI. We want to make sure this will have some applicability to the province. If it's good, I see no reason why we can't look at this.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I might remind his colleagues, who are currently hooting away in the House, that you had five years in which to do something. The situation is not new. In fact, I will certainly pose the same question to you.

But I think we need to do this, need to do something. Certainly we'll be speaking to PEI. I think it's up to us to protect the consumer of Ontario from outrageous prices. The member, if he agrees sincerely, will get his House leader to arrange for us to debate this issue.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to ask the government House leader to debate it today.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Algoma is seeking unanimous consent to debate the motion on gas prices. Agreed? No. I hear a no.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Point of order, Mr Speaker: Since you're mentioning House leaders, I'd be delighted to give unanimous consent today to bring in a predatory pricing law in the province of Ontario under your jurisdiction.

**The Speaker:** Unanimous consent for a predatory pricing law? Agreed? No. Final supplementary.

**Mr Martin:** The government is obviously not serious about this issue. You're not going to debate this resolution and you're not going to follow the lead of PEI. Will you at least reverse your decision on the charging for motor vehicle registration for people who live in northern Ontario? Will you do that?

We've asked repeatedly for your government to recognize the fact that consumers in northern Ontario routinely pay 10 cents more a litre for gasoline. It has been said repeatedly in this House by my colleagues that northerners have no choice, that they have to drive their cars. Minister, will you at least commit to having the motor vehicle registration fee eliminated for vehicle owners in northern Ontario?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I suppose I question why the member wants to actually debate a resolution. If he feels so strongly about it, just agree to it right now. Forget about the debate and just say: "Yes, we agree to this resolution. It's good for the people of Ontario."

Let me say something to the member for St Catharines. Obviously, the member for St Catharines has had somewhat over 10 years to think about this. You had five years when you were in power. It's been 10 years. You've had a lot of time to put your mind to it, even though you did nothing about it when you were in. Come on. We've got to have something that makes some sense to the consumer in Ontario.

**Mr Bradley:** Here is your chance.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for St Catharines, come to order. Everybody come to order.

**Mr Wildman:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: If the motion is called by the government House leader for passage today, we will agree to give unanimous consent to pass it without debate today.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Point of order, Mr Speaker: The government is committed to bringing this motion forward for debate, but I would think it should be done in a manner that allows all three parties to consider it fully, and then we will. We're more than anxious to bring this forward.

**The Speaker:** Government House leader, I appreciate your point of order, but I have a unanimous consent to put. I'm trying to gather, the unanimous consent was —

**Mr Wildman:** If it is called today, we will pass it without debate.

**1420**

**The Speaker:** I guess that is fairly clear. The House leader for the third party is seeking unanimous consent to call the resolution today and pass it without debate. Agreed? No. I have a no.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** He hasn't had a chance to answer the question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. That's out of order and I ask you to withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I ask you to withdraw. Just withdraw it.

**Mr Martin:** I withdraw.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I might remind the member that successive governments have had a chance to deal with this. If I can go backwards here, Mr Charlton and Mr Laughren made some statements about this in the House certainly, and Mr Kwinter, Mr Rae, Mr Peterson. We have been very clear on this. We have said, number one — and everyone has acknowledged this — that it is a federal issue, that we are going to have this discussion on September 10 with Mr Manley, with the federal Parliament.

We have also committed that if they won't do something about it, our government will. That's our commitment. We'll deal with it.

## CLASS SIZE

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Yet another school year began today across Ontario. Energetic, eager and excited elementary school students went to school to meet their new, dedicated teachers and their fellow classmates.

Quick phone calls to schools across Ontario indicate a serious problem is again re-emerging, and that of course is class sizes across Ontario. In southwestern Ontario, we have a grade 4 and 5 class of 38 students; in eastern Ontario, a grade 7 and 8 class of 40 students and a grade 3 and 4 class of 36 students; in northern Ontario, a grade 3

class of 36 students, a grade 5 class of 37 students and a grade 7 class of 36 students. Even for the first day of school, that is unacceptable.

My private member's bill, Bill 110, which protects class size, awaits your call to the social development committee. When will you call my bill, Bill 110, an act which protects class sizes, to the social development committee?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I certainly agree with the member opposite that there is a frustration for parents in this province when they know that Ontario has one of the lowest ratios of students to teachers in Canada, at something a little over 15 to 1, 15 students for every teacher, and then their student is in a classroom with 30 or 35 or 40 students. They go, "How can this be?" and that's one of the reasons we have asked an expert group, the Education Improvement Commission, to look at that: to say what is the right way of deploying teachers in Ontario, how we can use the qualified professional teachers we have to make sure that we can achieve what we all want to, and that is to have an excellent system of education for our students.

We will receive that report, and when we do, we will look at all the ways we can control class size. But I can say this to the member quite clearly: This government is moving forward with a funding model that will allow us to do that for the first time in the history of Ontario. That's what we're doing.

**Mr Bartolucci:** On May 15, 1997, Bill 132, the Tartan Act, went to the House for first reading. On June 5, it received second reading and was referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. On August 21, it was reported for third reading. This private member's bill was introduced by the Conservative member for Hamilton West.

Minister, my bill, Bill 110, which protects children so that they can be educated in classes of meaningful and practical size, passed second reading on February 6, 1997, and currently awaits your call to the social development committee. Seven months later, this hasn't happened. Will you tell the people of Ontario what is more important, the number of blocks in a tartan and the number of threads in each block or the number of pupils in the classes of Ontario? Will you tell the people of Ontario what is more important to the Mike Harris government?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order, order, order. Would you come to order over there, please? Thank you.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** Where's that?

**The Speaker:** Lambton, I think. Minister.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I want to thank the member opposite for the theatrics. Let me see if I can explain to you what I think is important for the people of Ontario. They want to make sure that the quality of education in Ontario is there for their students, and they want to make sure that that future of education is built step by step, in a way that the foundation is laid for the future.

I can tell you, the way to do that is not some simplistic solution that the member opposite might see. The way to do that is by having the province do the hard work and the homework to make sure the future of education is right. That's exactly what we're doing today. We're building the allocation model to be the best in Canada. We're building the curriculum to be the best in Canada. I can assure the member opposite that unlike your government when it was in power, unlike the previous government, we will address the serious issues. We will address it in a serious way, not in a simplistic way like the member opposite.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Sudbury, I ask you to withdraw those comments, please.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Withdrawn.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the acting Premier. This afternoon we begin debate on your downloading bill. In a way that's almost becoming a hallmark of your government, it's another example of how you've rushed ahead so quickly and failed to pay attention to the detail that I'm not even sure you're aware of the full impact of some of what's contained in your bill. I'm talking specifically about the proposed legislative amendments to the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the download of public health to the municipalities and the new guideline for mandatory services.

You've not just downloaded public health, you've totally abandoned any kind of a focus on healthy adolescents, on teen health. Lost is the entire section on healthy adolescents. Part of what is now required for teens is moved under some other programs, like smoking cessation. A little bit of it is kept, but gone is the requirement to provide teen counselling and investigation into teen suicide. Gone is substance abuse counselling and education. Gone are dental programs for teens.

Minister, I have to ask you, do you think that teen suicide or substance abuse among teens is no longer a problem for the provincial government to be concerned about?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** In terms of the transfer of authorities and the revised funding formula between the province and the municipalities, something I might add that municipalities have been requesting for years and years, if not decades, something your government, the NDP government, tried and failed miserably to address, couldn't get the municipalities on side — in conjunction with the municipalities, we have been working on a division of authorities. Some of them involve public health, for example, some of them involve various health programs. In a meeting earlier this year, the municipalities brought forward a proposal to the province. The province has accepted that proposal.

I have great confidence in the municipalities. Having served at the municipal level for many years, I have great confidence. You may not share it, but I have great confidence in the ability of municipalities to meet the health care and total programs of the residents they serve.

**Ms Lankin:** I guess when you don't know the answer, you just spew out rhetoric. I asked you specifically about

mandatory guidelines in public health and you gave me a lot of nonsense about your negotiations with the municipalities etc.

Let me ask you about another area under public health, and I think this is even more significant. This is the downloading of all of the funding for sexual health programs. In this province, we have made great strides in ending what was an epidemic of teen pregnancies. If you look at sexual diseases in the city of Toronto, even still today the highest rates of gonorrhoea or chlamydia are in young people under the age of 20. This is a program that was 100% funded by the province because they recognized the need.

Experts in the area of sexual health, of planned parenthood, of dealing with teens and unwanted pregnancies are so fearful that we are turning the clock back and that we are now going to see a turnback of the clock to before the 1960s when we started to make real progress.

Minister, people want you to make a reversal in your decision. Public health needs to remain at the —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon David Johnson:** It's the view of this government that the process will actually improve delivery of local services because it will allow municipalities to tailor programs to the constituents they serve.

Specifically, the ministry will require municipalities to deliver mandatory programs in the family health area, for example, which includes child health, nutrition, sexual and reproductive health; also in the area of infectious disease control, including AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases; and chronic disease prevention, including heart disease, cancer, and preventable injuries.

The province of Ontario is maintaining a control in terms of programs that have to be delivered in a general sense, but within that umbrella, municipalities will have more leeway to deliver the services tailored to their constituents.

**1430**

## FIRE SAFETY

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** My question is to the Solicitor General. I know that you very well remember the tragic fire which occurred in the city of Mississauga in March 1995 which took place in the Meadowcroft retirement home. Eight residents died as a result of that tragedy, which involved a number of my own constituents.

Recently the regional coroner held a press conference to review the response to the coroner's inquest recommendations. My question today is, would you like to tell this House what has been done in response to the inquest recommendations to help ensure that this type of unnecessary loss of life does not happen again?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I want to thank the honourable member for her question. The government has made fire safety a priority, as demonstrated by the introduction and passage of Bill 84, which is dedicated to prevention and public education which are undoubtedly the keys to long-term public safety.

Specifically with respect to public education for seniors, the fire marshal's public fire safety council introduced Older and Wiser, a community-based program which kicked off in June of this year.

With respect to the Meadowcroft inquest recommendations, I understand the presiding coroner is satisfied with the progress made. Almost 90% of the recommendations have either been implemented or are under active consideration. In fact the regional coroner, Dr Peter Clark, has stated, "The agencies and ministries have taken their reviews seriously and the risk of death of vulnerable seniors has been greatly reduced."

We remain committed to enhanced fire safety for all Ontarians and especially those who are vulnerable.

**Mrs Marland:** The Meadowcroft fire was actually the second fire tragedy in Mississauga in a residential care facility, the first being the Extendicare fire in 1979, as a result of which 26 people died. We now have professional opinions that many of these lives could have been saved in both these fires had there been sprinkler systems installed in these buildings. I'm wondering if you can tell us when changes will be made that will make sprinkler systems mandatory in residential care facilities.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm pleased to report that work on this issue has been ongoing. Changes to the building code, which is within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, are expected later this year. In coordination with the changes to the building code, which primarily address the requirements for new buildings, the fire marshal has established two committees to develop changes to the fire code which address standards for existing facilities like Meadowcroft.

Again in the words of Dr Clark, "I am most impressed that the proposed changes, especially the changes requiring the installation of automatic sprinklers in institutions, including retirement homes, should go a long way in protecting our vulnerable seniors."

## PUBLIC SERVICE AND LABOUR RELATIONS REFORM

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. During your leadoff speech on second reading of Bill 136, you said:

"The specifics of Bill 136 as they now stand, let me say that they are not etched in stone.... If there are suggestions, from whatever quarter, to improve the bill, we are more than ready to listen and consider them.... Fairness to public sector employers, employees and taxpayers demands that a consistent set of balanced rules be in place to smooth the...restructuring of government services."

We've been hearing, and I'm sure you have too, about the undercutting of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, with its 50 years of experience and almost universal respect throughout the community, except perhaps from this government. In spite of that, you cut their budget by 40%.

The bill establishes two new commissions to handle the job. They don't have the experience, the collective knowledge nor the trust which the board has.

Minister, will you consider as one of your options getting rid of these new, costly commissions, both of them, and empower the Labour Relations Board to handle the restructuring process?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I would indicate to you, as I indicated in my opening statement, that we are quite willing to take a look at all the suggestions that come forward and are prepared to give them serious consideration. As long as we can continue to meet the government's objectives, the government's objectives being to facilitate the restructuring of the hospitals and the municipalities and the school boards, if we can continue to ensure that each individual employee is going to be treated fairly and equally, we are quite prepared to take a look at all suggestions that come our way.

**Mr Patten:** I look forward to seeing many amendments come forward on the government side.

You said you've met with the police and the firefighters. You've obviously heard how upset they are with the government's proposal to take away the only tool which ensures balance and fairness in their system of collective bargaining. That, of course, is the provision that arbitrators are mutually agreed upon by both parties.

The provision in Bill 136 isn't temporary, and you know it's permanent. This will change the way business is done in bargaining for over 80,000 essential workers such as police, firefighters, nurses. It's a permanent change.

The system of collective bargaining has worked well. Over 85% of their collective agreements are negotiated freely, with no more than 10% to 15% that have been settled by mutually agreed upon arbitrators. Will you remove the essential workers from the provisions of Bill 136 and allow them to continue to negotiate in their fair and balanced system of interest arbitration?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As I've indicated, we certainly are meeting with the stakeholder groups impacted by Bill 136, obviously the employee groups you've mentioned. We're also going to be meeting with AMO and some of the employer groups.

I would just repeat what I said before. We need to remember the long-term objectives. The objectives of the bill are to ensure that we promote negotiated settlements as opposed to arbitrated settlements. We want to encourage people to get into a real dialogue, a real discussion.

We will certainly again be addressing the concerns that have been raised by the stakeholders. As I say, we want to make sure that we facilitate the restructuring process, that we can continue to provide the needed services to people in Ontario and that each employee is treated fairly. But, yes, we are quite willing to take a look at all the concerns and give them our serious consideration.

## CASINOS

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism again. Hopefully, he'll take it this time.

I want to follow up on the billion-dollar tax grab your government is planning, using Ontario charities as a front. It appears you're also going to be responsible for wiping out dozens of the Ontario small businesses that built charity gaming operations here in the first place. By putting the new large permanent casinos into clusters to be operated by big companies, you have shut out the small players.

I've met with some of these small businessmen in my office, and they're angry because your government has stopped listening. Why are you favouring big business, Vegas-linked casino operators, over small Ontario businesses?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'm going to refer this question to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. I'm just surprised that the member over there didn't direct it there in the first place.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Now you have to answer the question. You made a comment; you now must answer the question.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** All I can say to the member for Sault Ste Marie is that we are certainly not favouring big business at all in this procedure. The small businesses will be able to participate, just as any business can. If they meet the criteria, if they can compete successfully, there's no reason why they wouldn't. I don't see why the member has this concern. I think he's uninformed, because he should have been paying attention to what we've been saying.

**1440**

**Mr Martin:** That's not what the small businesses are telling me, but what can you expect from a government that believes it has all the answers and never listens to people anyway? We knew you were going to steamroll over labour unions and welfare recipients, but never in our wildest dreams did we think you were going to kick the crap out of small business as well.

You're going to soak $1 billion out of our communities by raising the betting limit and establishing 36 permanent casinos, each with 40 tables and 150 video slot machines, and you're going to close down a number of very viable fledgling small businesses along the way. You're willing to run roughshod over some very viable small businesses in this province. You've handpicked a commission to take the blame for all your decisions. That's your pattern; that's the way you do business.

Why aren't you willing to take the time to listen to the men and women in small businesses in this province and get this casino initiative right from the start?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** Once again I'm surprised that the member is not as informed as he should be. Had he been reading the material that has been properly distributed, he would know that charities are going to receive

from these operations well in excess of $80 million. The most they've got in the past is $10 million. This is a windfall for the charities.

Also on the subject of small business, no government in recent history has done so much for small business in this province: this July, 5,300 new jobs in this province. Employment is up 124,000 in the last five months. The unemployment rate is down to 8.2%, and that's the lowest it's been in a long, long time. Housing starts are up. That helps small businesses.

This man has not been paying attention. He should be ashamed of himself.

## VEHICLE EMISSION TESTING

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. The minister has stated before in this House that smog and air pollution cause about 1,800 premature deaths each year in Ontario. It also takes a toll on the environment by harming vegetation, materials and crops.

On August 22, the minister announced a major initiative to fight smog and air pollution. A number of my constituents have inquired about whether their cars are going to be required to be tested. Can the minister clarify what vehicles are going to be affected by this program?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** This is the first government in this province, even in this country, to implement such an extensive program as Drive Clean. Even though these programs have been known for some period of time, previous governments did not take the opportunity to put forward such an initiative.

Cars and tighter emission standards will improve our air. This program will take effect next year, in 1998. Drive Clean will require the regular testing of tailpipe emissions from passenger cars, light trucks, heavy trucks and buses. Drive Clean will give motorists an opportunity to find out about the environmental performance of their own vehicles. Motorists will be able to avoid the need for future repairs by learning about preventive maintenance. Testing will cost no more than $30 but could be less than $30. This is a tremendous program for the quality of air in Ontario.

**Mr Jim Brown:** Smog is a problem that affects everyone, but my constituents are particularly concerned about this issue because my riding is in the GTA. My constituents are looking for fast action. Could the minister clarify to the House and my constituents what the specific time line and details are for the implementation of the Drive Clean initiative?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** This program is going to take place in the greater Toronto area and Hamilton-Wentworth first because that's where it will make the greatest difference in the quality of air. However, if other areas would like this program earlier, all they have to do is have their municipalities send a resolution to us and we will implement this program in other areas of the province if it's technically feasible.

Next year this will begin with trucks and buses across the province for next summer, the summer of 1998, and in the fall of 1998 it will start for automobiles in the GTA and Hamilton-Wentworth area. It will expand to other areas of the province as we become more familiar with the program, as we work out any of the kinks in the program. But as I've already said, we are willing to put this out to other areas at an earlier date if that is technically feasible.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We think that Drive Clean will be to the air quality as the blue box was to solid waste in Ontario. This is a tremendous environmental step for the people of Ontario and the government of Ontario and we are very proud of this —

**The Speaker:** New question, official opposition.

## HAZARDOUS WASTE

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I certainly feel much better hearing that announcement again from the minister.

Minister, I want to ask you about the issue of recycling in Ontario and the regulation. As you know, in view of the Plastimet fire, there have been calls from the fire marshal's office, from all sides, to strengthen and toughen up recycling laws in Ontario and their controls. So I was surprised to see a document entitled "Responsive Environmental Protection: Technical Annex," put out by your ministry, in which it states that you will look at and consider deregulating hazardous waste materials such as batteries, thermostats, photo-processing waste, circuit boards, waste oils sent for refining.

In the document it says, "These changes would allow recyclable materials to be treated as raw materials and to be exempt from waste requirements for transportation, handling and approvals." That would mean that if these recommendations are adopted, these items such as thermostats, batteries and waste oil, could be put in landfill sites, could be treated without any type of certificate of compliance.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Agostino:** Minister, can you stand up today and assure the House that you will discard these recommendations and have no plans in deregulating —

**The Speaker:** Minister of Environment and Energy.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** We had a very difficult fire in the city of Hamilton some time ago, a fire that started, evidently, because there wasn't adequate fire protection in that particular building. As a result of that we are very concerned about the handling of recycling material, and my ministry is working along with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to try to come up with a better answer in dealing with recycling material.

With regard to the other material, hazardous waste, which the member is bringing forward, we are looking for new methods and new ways of dealing with these hazard-

ous materials. Up to this point in time we are not satisfied that they have been dealt with in a controlled enough manner, and therefore we are looking for different suggestions to deal with those. We expect to deal with those in our regulatory reform package. We are getting —

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We are getting the buy-in of industry to become involved in this and therefore we are looking to improve the system for handling hazardous waste in this province.

**1450**

**Mr Agostino:** In view of the Plastimet fire, I am absolutely amazed that the minister would not stand in his place and say that this government has no plans to deregulate and treat hazardous waste such as batteries, thermostats and waste oils simply as non-hazardous material. I can't believe, Minister, that you're not denying and that you would not outright dismiss the possibility that this document here, your ministry document, is accurate and that you have plans to go ahead and do this for the sake of helping your friends in the private sector and helping companies.

What this would mean, if this regulation goes through that you have not denied today you're looking at, is that companies can set up recycling operations for batteries, for waste oils, for thermostats, items that would have lead and mercury. One litre of waste oil would contaminate one million litres of water.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr Agostino:** This is astounding, that you would not today assure us you're not looking at this. In view of the fire, in view of what has happened across Ontario, can you stand up and assure people —

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, thanks. Minister.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** When this government came in, we found that in many of the cases, while there were regulations in place, what was happening is that hazardous products in this province were not being dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner. Therefore, we were looking for new and innovative ways to deal with these hazardous wastes to ensure that they would be brought back to central depots and that they would be transferred under control from those depots to a proper repository to be disposed of in the most meaningful manner.

As well, we were interested in bringing many of these products back into recycling into new products.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** This is a regulatory reform discussion paper and we are looking —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** That's within the rules.

## PETITIONS

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas the undersigned residents living in the city of Thunder Bay in northwestern Ontario are in need of a new regional acute care hospital situated in the city of Thunder Bay to provide the said residents with quality health care services in a modern and up-to-date acute care hospital; and

"Whereas the partial renovation and restructuring of the existing Port Arthur General Hospital, a 65-year-old outdated and antiquated hospital building, proposed by the health services review commission and the Minister of Health for the province of Ontario will not be suitable, adequate or proper to provide such quality health care services to the said residents; and

"Whereas the undersigned residents endorse and support the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital and the trustees of the hospital board and their vision of a new centrally located hospital to serve the northwestern Ontario region;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to reverse the decision and direction of the health services review commission and the Minister of Health to have all acute care services for the city of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario region delivered from the renovated and restructured site of Port Arthur General Hospital and to endorse and approve capital funding to build a new centrally located acute care hospital in the city of Thunder Bay."

These petitions are signed by several hundred residents in my community, and I've affixed my own signature in full agreement.

### CANCER PREVENTION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have another petition which was signed by people who were at the breast cancer international conference which I attended in Kingston, in July I believe. It reads:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario,

"Whereas cancer claims in excess of 20,000 lives annually in Ontario alone; and

"Whereas cancer treatment costs Ontario taxpayers in excess of $1 billion annually; and

"Whereas the best way to fight cancer or any other disease is through preventive measures; and

"Whereas the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer has advised the government to set realistic and realizable targets for phasing out the release of environmental toxins; and

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly on April 18, 1996, passed a resolution to that effect with support from all three parties;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"The Premier and the Minister of Health should immediately implement the April 18 resolution and strike a working committee to begin the task of setting realistic targets for the phase-out of persistent bio-accumulative environmental toxins."

I affix my signature to this petition since I agree with it.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by 308 people. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** "Whereas the Ontario government is proposing to completely change the structure of relations between the province and municipalities without any public consultation with Ontario; and

"The restructuring proposes to download on to municipalities the cost of public transportation and essential social services like welfare and long-term care for seniors and people with chronic illnesses;

"The restructuring takes away the power to levy tax on school boards and subsequently any real power over the schools and curricula;

"The actions of the government are not representative of the promise to keep funding at the existing level and do not recognize that different communities don't have the same resources to absorb new burdens and are creating some inequities in access to essential services;

"The government does not show interest in consultation with the population and does not take into account the reaction of the population; it represents a threat to democracy;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, are hereby expressing non-confidence against the government of the province of Ontario because we are concerned with the inequities of the life of the province and the wellbeing of the children, neighbours and communities."

I've also affixed my signature.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition signed by a number of residents of Ontario. It states:

"We, the undersigned concerned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the public to have the right to be informed about proposed bills and that there should be enough time for public hearings about proposed bills;

"We believe the opposition party MPPs should have adequate time to study bills proposed, to have a chance to suggest amendments;

"We therefore do not agree with the proposed ruling of the Ontario Conservatives that they can pass a bill only two weeks after introducing it and introduce two bills during the same two-week period" —

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am reminded the standing orders say that we cannot read petitions. We must only paraphrase them and make reference to them. I wonder if you could direct the member in the future to not read entire speeches into the record.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** The standing orders read as follows, on page 30: "Presentation in House. Member to summarize contents:" "A member may present a petition in the House during routine proceedings under the proceeding 'Petitions.' The member may make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures attached thereto."

I find the member's statement appropriate.

**Mr Wildman:** In that case, Speaker, I will summarize this petition as saying that these 12 people find the rule changes to be —

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. The Chair recognizes the member for Peterborough.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I understood you just read an order that said a member, in presenting a petition, may summarize as well as indicate the number of signatures. I'm not sure that you indicated that precluded reading the petition as well as summarizing it.

**The Acting Speaker:** It very clearly indicates that the member may summarize and may read a brief statement. I accept the statement from the member for Algoma.

**1500**

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Mr Speaker, I believe in some of these petitions that some of the points that are being addressed are very important. If we can't read them correctly, we've got a problem in this House.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** You want to read this?

**Mr Stewart:** Yes, probably.

**Mr Wildman:** Wait a minute. You're supposed to summarize it.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Yeah, Mr Gilchrist —

**Mr Stewart:** Mr Gilchrist can do what he wishes to. I'd like —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Order. Do you have a petition, the member for Peterborough?

**Mr Stewart:** Yes, I do have a petition that I would like to read, sir.

"Over half the people of Ontario are women. Only 5% of the money spent on medical research goes to research in women's health;

"Women's College is the only hospital in Ontario with a primary mandate giving priority to research and treatment dedicated to women's health needs;

"The World Health Organization has named Women's College Hospital as the sole collaborating centre for women's health for both North and South America;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the continuance, independence, women-centred focus and accessible downtown location of the one hospital most crucial to the future of women's health."

## VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I'd be happy to present a summary of the petition I have which is presented by a significant number of my constituents who are calling to secure justice for all with prejudice towards none and with compassion for the weak and powerless, and who are urging all those in leadership positions to share their shock at the fact that there would be new casinos introduced across this province without the promised referendum and who are appalled by the fact that we would have new lottery terminals introduced to our community without the consent of the citizens. They have asked that all efforts to install such video lottery terminals in our community be resisted.

I present that petition on their behalf.

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** In light of the concern of the member for Scarborough East, I will summarize. I have a petition which asks the Ontario government to protect the hunting heritage of the province to continue with the bear hunt.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** In accordance with my normal practice and in accordance with rule 38(b), I'll summarize the petition I have, signed by approximately 88 residents of Ontario. It confirms that women now have the lawful right to go topless in public and that the federal government has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate public nudity. It also respectfully petitions the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code, and I present it today.

## TVONTARIO

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** Many people across Ontario are concerned about the potential privatization of TVOntario and the campaign has begun. I will read the petition:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas TVOntario/TFO is owned by the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has opposed public support for maintaining TVO as a publicly owned and funded educational broadcaster by putting TVO through a privatization review; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has not confirmed that full public participation will be part of this privatization review;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold open and honest public consultation with the people of Ontario before making a decision on the future of TVO/TFO."

I'm proud to sign my name to it.

## FIRE IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a fire at a PVC plastic vinyl plant located in the middle of one of Hamilton's residential areas burned for three days; and

"Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and called for a limited voluntary evacuation of several blocks around the site; and

"Whereas the burning of PVC results in the formation and release of toxic substances such as dioxins and furans as well as large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold a full public inquiry on the Hamilton Plastimet fire; and

As I'm in support of this, I add my name to it.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I have more petitions relating to the issue of toplessness in Ontario, signed by members in my riding from Kennedy Road Tabernacle and Bramalea Baptist Church.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to ban going topless in public places."

I'd be happy to affix my name as well.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas since Mike Harris took office gasoline prices have increased on an average of a dramatic 10 cents a litre, which is over 45 cents a gallon; and

"Whereas this increase in the price of gasoline has outpaced the rate of inflation by a rate that is totally unacceptable to all consumers in this province because it is unfair and directly affects their ability to purchase other consumer goods; and

"Whereas Premier Mike Harris and ministers within the cabinet of his government, while in opposition, expressed grave concern for gas price gouging and asked the government of the day to take action; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government could take action under Ontario law and pass predatory gas pricing legislation which would protect consumers, but instead seems intent on looking after the interests of the big oil companies;

"We, the undersigned, petition Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to eliminate gas price fixing and prevent the oil companies from gouging the public on an essential and vital product."

I affix my signature to this petition because I'm in complete agreement with its contents.

## PAY EQUITY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has introduced Bill 136; and

"Whereas Bill 136 strips entitlements to employee status and therefore pay equity rights for home child care providers; and

"Whereas home child care providers are predominantly female; and

"Whereas home child care providers are one of the lowest-paid groups of workers in Ontario;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to withdraw Bill 136 and its implications for the Pay Equity Act."

On behalf of the NDP caucus, I add my name to theirs.

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1997

## LOI DE 1997 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES

Mr Carroll moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to improve Services, increase Efficiency and benefit Taxpayers by eliminating Duplication and reallocating Responsibilities between Provincial and Municipal Governments in various areas and to implement other aspects of the Government's "Who Does What" Agenda / Projet de loi 152, Loi visant à améliorer les services, à accroître l'efficience et à procurer des avantages aux contribuables en éliminant le double emploi et en redistribuant les responsabilités entre le gouvernement provincial et les municipalités dans divers secteurs et visant à mettre en oeuvre d'autres aspects du programme «Qui fait quoi» du gouvernement.

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I'm pleased today to begin second reading debate of Bill 152, the Services Improvement Act, Mr Speaker. I'd like to advise you upfront that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Scarborough East.

This legislation allows us to move ahead with changes that will provide better services at a lower cost to taxpayers. In May of this year, following extensive input from our municipal partners, the government announced a substantial change to the provincial-municipal relationship based on proposals submitted by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

We agreed to cut residential education property taxes in half and to take on additional responsibility for funding education. This would take pressure off the property tax and give municipalities additional room to fund other services that are best delivered locally.

**1510**

The changes we announced, our Who Does What package, would bring education costs under control and lead to better services at lower cost to taxpayers. On August 6 we released the preliminary figures that showed the estimated costs of the Who Does What reforms. These numbers are meant as a tool to help municipalities to estimate their future costs and assist them in their decision-making process. They are not the final product. There will be further revisions as decisions are made. What is important is that municipalities do their part to keep costs down and continue to find savings and efficiencies.

For several months now, two implementation teams have been hard at work to make sure the transition is a smooth one. One co-chaired by myself and Terry Mundell, former president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, is looking at social and community health services. The other, co-chaired by Mr Mundell and the member for Oxford, is looking at all the other Who Does What changes. A group of chief administrative officers from the municipal sector is also working with provincial staff on the calculation of the financial impacts of Who Does What.

This legislation is another step in the implementation process for Who Does What. It would give municipalities responsibility for program delivery and funding in whole or in part for a number of local services effective January 1, 1998. Allow me to touch briefly on the changes that this bill will make.

The legislation includes measures that would improve and strengthen the system of social housing in Ontario. Social housing is one of the community services needed by low-income people that can be better provided at the community level. Social housing should be provided locally. It should also be integrated with welfare and other health services delivery at the community level to make the entire system work better and more efficiently.

This legislation is the first stage of a three-stage process. It would allow the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to bill the costs of social housing to upper-tier municipalities, separated cities and district welfare boards in northern Ontario as of January 1, 1998. This approach will ensure simplicity and it will be consistent with billing practices for other services, such as social assistance. The second stage, which is also well under way and involves discussions with municipalities and stakeholders, is on the reform and devolution of the social housing system. The third stage will involve a period of between two and three years, when the administration of the social housing system will be gradually transferred to municipalities. We expect to complete the transfer of the administrative responsibilities of this new improved system to municipalities by the year 2000.

This transfer of responsibilities makes sense. We want to make sure that social housing is more efficient and effective and we want to improve access for people who need help with their housing.

I want to stress two things that the proposed bill will not do. It will not have any impact whatsoever on the tenants of social housing. Second, it will not have any impact whatsoever on the operating agreements between housing providers and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As of January 1, municipalities would assume 100% responsibility for public health programs. These services will continue to be delivered locally where they can be tailored to meet local needs while — and this is very important — maintaining provincial standards.

This legislation will provide direction on how municipalities will fund programs and share costs in multi-municipality health units. Mandatory health programs will continue to be delivered by local boards of health. The province will continue to set program standards for each program and will monitor and enforce the standards. These mandatory programs are currently under review and consultations with stakeholders are taking place. The final version should be available to the municipalities and their boards of health prior to January 1998.

Municipalities will have added flexibility in delivering mandatory public health programs as long as provincial standards are met. The three key programs that municipalities will be required to deliver by legislation are chronic disease prevention, infectious disease control, and family and child health.

The province will retain responsibility for overall disease surveillance and provide vaccines for immunization programs. In addition, the province will continue to fund certain programs, such as the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program, which will help children at risk and provide them with needed community supports.

Should this House approve this legislation, municipalities will assume 100% funding responsibility for land ambulance services beginning January 1998. Funding land ambulances gives municipalities more flexibility to look at integrating their emergency services to better serve their communities. It gives them the opportunity to find ways to better integrate services, such as firefighting, police and ambulance, or ambulance with other health and social services. The program administration responsibilities of the land ambulance services will be transferred to municipalities by the year 2000. The province will continue to regulate and set standards for the delivery of land ambulance services.

This government will continue to work with municipalities to ensure that public health programs and land ambulance services remain accessible and consistent for all Ontarians.

Children are a priority of this government. We have already increased available spending on child care to up to $600 million, the highest level in the history of this province. As part of the May 6 budget, we announced a new child care tax credit that will use $40 million of the total child care budget to assist lower-income working families. This means we are helping 90,000 Ontario families and 125,000 children.

We are proposing to amend the Day Nurseries Act to make it mandatory for municipalities to cost-share and manage the delivery of child care services. As previously announced as part of the Who Does What initiative, all child care services would be cost-shared 80% by the province and 20% by municipalities. Municipalities will be responsible for cost-sharing all child care services, not just fee subsides but wage subsidies, resource centres and special needs resourcing. This is a positive change that will benefit all children.

This legislation makes administrative changes to the child care system. The streamlining supports the local development and delivery of child care service. By building and expanding on this experience, which is already in place at the local level, these changes will simplify what is now a complex process. Municipalities already have experience in the fee subsidies area. This bill uses and builds on that experience.

We believe that communities are in the best position to design a system that meets their needs and the needs of their clients. However, we realize at the same time there must be province-wide standards and expectations.

This community-based approach to child care, and indeed to all social services, will allow the local community to better meet local needs. These changes will help us bring sense to the current tangle of social and community health services. We are committed to continue working with our municipal colleagues to create an effective system that better meets the needs of children and families.

The Who Does What initiative recognized that GO Transit service primarily meets local and regional transit needs. It recommended that this responsibility should be transferred to the municipalities served by GO Transit. The benefit will be that GO Transit will be more accountable to local communities. The delivery of GO Transit at the municipal level will also encourage greater integration of transit services across the greater Toronto area.

**1520**

We are currently exploring a number of options for the structure of the municipal governance mechanism of GO

Transit, such as the Greater Toronto Services Board. This legislation proposes to amend the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority Act to enable municipal funding of GO Transit for the interim period until a replacement municipal governance mechanism is in place.

Currently, taxpayers from every region of Ontario subsidize GO Transit's operating and capital deficit by approximately $110 million a year. The proposed legislation would create a mechanism for these costs to be shared by the regions that benefit from GO: the regions of Peel, York, Durham, Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth and the city of Toronto.

My colleague the Minister of Transportation would consult with the affected municipalities to develop a fair cost-sharing formula. We intend this to be a simple, equitable method of cost-sharing to allow GO Transit to meet its capital and operating requirements. Regional chairs who currently sit on the board of directors will continue to have a say in the operation of GO during the interim period.

This legislation proposes that the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act regulating smaller onsite sewage systems be transferred from the Ministry of Environment and Energy to the building code, which is administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Municipalities would be responsible for the approval and inspections of smaller onsite systems. This would streamline service through a one-window approach for homeowners and builders. The building industry and the public would only have to deal with one permit, one code, one appeals process and one ministry for smaller on-lot septic systems. This would reduce red tape and the regulatory burden on business, a worthwhile objective I'm sure all members of the House agree with. It would simplify municipal enforcement and provide opportunities for cost saving through the coordination of approvals and inspections. Large-scale septic systems, communal systems and hauled sewage systems would continue to be a provincial responsibility.

Given ongoing discussions regarding northern service delivery, responsibility for enforcing standards for onsite sewage systems in northern municipalities and unorganized territories will generally remain with existing delivery agents.

The rules governing septics would be strengthened to protect public health and the environment.

The government will continue to work with the municipal sector through the provincial-municipal implementation team and the social and community health services implementation team and others to ensure a smooth transition to the new provincial-municipal responsibilities.

Our government has long stated its intention to end the confusion that surrounds who is responsible for what. We have long stated we would work to eliminate waste and duplication. We have long stated we believe the level of government that delivers the service is the best level of government to operate it.

This bill takes the next step in implementing the Who Does What package. It provides a legislative framework for the funding arrangements we outlined on May 1 and the preliminary changes in municipal costs and revenues announced on August 6. These changes will lead to better services and more efficient and accountable government. We are working together with municipalities towards a common goal of less burden on the taxpayer, and that will only benefit the people of Ontario.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I am pleased to follow up on my colleague from Chatham-Kent, who has done a tremendous job of laying out the framework of this bill, an important initiative that was first announced in January this year.

You will recall when we first put out the whole issue of the transfer of services between municipalities and the provincial government, when we first set out to recognize and address once and for all the fact that there is far too much duplication, that there is far too much waste, that there is far too little direction to be applied to a number of important issues, because there were too many chefs. Bill 152 is simply the legislative framework that follows up on literally a year's worth of discussion now, all of 1997.

You will also recall that back in April, as a result of working together with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the municipalities themselves came back with a response to our original proposals and they themselves have set out the framework that is now embodied in this bill. I am very proud of the fact that we have consulted, as my colleague pointed out, through two transition teams staffed over 80% by municipal politicians, people who are expert in their fields, people who know best how to manage local affairs, and as a result of their feedback and their input, we now have before us a plan that I think most reasonable people at both levels of government agree will work. This bill reflects very much that spirit of dialogue and consultation, and while there still may be a few minor points to iron out, given the Premier's commitment that this whole process will be revenue-neutral, I think it is safe to say that municipalities across this province are falling in line in supporting this bill, as we hoped they would, and as well they should, given that it was their own representatives who have done these negotiations.

We need look no further than the mayoralty race here in the city of Toronto, where one of the candidates has already come out and said that he not only agrees with the perception but that the reality will be, if he is successful, that the city of Toronto will not see any tax increases. We see the same thing from the former MPP Bob Chiarelli, who is running for regional chair down in Ottawa-Carleton. He has made a similar commitment; in fact, he has gone on the record a number of times and indicated that it will be revenue-neutral. He believes that. He absolutely has committed that it will work in his municipality, and if he is elected, he has said that there will not be a tax impact based on what we're doing here today.

As a result of all these efforts over the last nine months, we now have before us a series of amendments to various statutes, all of which have a common theme, and that theme is to determine which level of government is most appropriate for the delivery of a specific service.

I'd like to take my time this afternoon and deal with the most important aspect that touches the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. That would be the social housing transfer. I think it has been obvious for a long time that the social housing system in Ontario is broken. It's not something that started in the last year or two. The fact of the matter is that for far too many years there has been a lack of attention, there has been a top-down approach to management style; yet the consensus among tenants, housing providers, municipalities and the province has been that there is not only a need to reform the system, that perhaps most important, there is a need to have local views reflected in what happens with social housing in each community.

That is why we asked experts in the field to come up with recommendations, and as has been the case from day one in our government, we have consulted, we have used expert opinions, and I am very proud of the fact that the Advisory Council on Social Housing Reform we established will be tabling their report later this afternoon and they'll come up with a number of recommendations, I'm sure. All of them and all of us agree that we want to make the system simpler, more accountable, more efficient and more effective as we transfer it to the municipalities.

We believe that social housing is one of those community services that is best addressed at the local level. So when municipalities take control of the system at some point next year, we want them to have a system that is less costly and more efficient. We understand the municipalities want flexibility, and we will carefully consider the recommendations of the advisory council on areas of provincial interest and how they will impact as part of the transfer. However, one thing we are not going to budge on will be the setting of provincial standards to ensure that fair and equitable social housing services remain available throughout this province regardless of the municipality. Reform of social housing will not result in a loss or reduction in the number of affordable housing units in this province, and we're also ensuring that low-income tenants will continue to receive their rental subsidies.

**1530**

We're quite dismayed that previous governments over the last 10 years did allow housing stock to deteriorate. This government is not prepared to allow that deterioration to continue. Our government is spending $215 million to repair social housing buildings, over and above the $100 million in annual funding for ongoing repairs, and that includes restoring the capital reserve funds of non-profits and co-ops which were drained by the former NDP government, just like they drained the northern heritage fund.

Just to come back again, the Advisory Council on Social Housing Reform was created back in June, with a mandate to recommend reforms to the financing, administration and regulation of social housing in Ontario prior to the transfer to the new municipalities.

The seven council members were chosen for their expertise in the areas of finance, property management, federal housing programs and management of private non-profits and municipal non-profits. The council also received advice from representatives from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, as well as the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, the Co-operative Housing Federation, the Ontario Housing Corp and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The council has met throughout the summer and heard deputations from 20 different groups representing all aspects of the social housing system. It also had a meeting with elected representatives of municipalities as well as municipal staff to hear their views on the subject.

The report, as I say, was issued at 2 o'clock today. It should be noted that there was not full agreement on all issues, and that's hardly surprising. However, a broad consensus was achieved, which is important when one considers just how diverse an issue social housing is.

It's important to note that the council did not consider the negotiations with the federal government. The province has indicated that it supports the federal principles, and the decision to transfer funding and administration to municipalities does not change this position. The province will continue its negotiations with the federal government on this understanding, and we'll provide copies of the advisory council report to our federal colleagues.

Municipalities' main concerns with social housing are the costs, particularly capital repair costs and interest rate liability, as well as the timing for transfer and the overall responsibility to take care of the housing stock. They also expect to have a say in the program operation if they're funding the service. The advisory council's report only addresses the cost concern and the pay-for-say component.

There will be no formal consultation on this report, because we believe it to be a technical submission. The government is interested in hearing the response and reaction of the various stakeholders and we'll be happy to receive any written responses the people may wish to make.

I'd like to take a minute to talk about the background behind the work that has been done by the advisory council and in fact even predates the whole issue of Who Does What. Much has been said about the condition and the cost of social housing. Over the years, there's no doubt that the costs for capital repairs have increased, as well as the operating costs of many of these buildings. In fact, the government is funding ongoing capital repairs while streamlining operations to improve efficiency and reduce costs. These measures should ensure that social housing being transferred to municipalities is in the best possible shape and is being run as efficiently as possible. Here are just a few examples.

The province recently announced that it is investing, on a one-time basis, $215 million to repair aging social housing stock. Non-profit and cooperative housing sponsors will get a $173-million boost to their capital reserve funds. The balance of the funding, $42 million, is targeted for Ontario Housing Corp, for capital repairs and upgrades.

Over the past five years, OHC has spent $513 million on capital improvements to its public housing stock. OHC

recently developed an asset management system to report on the general condition of its stock and project its five-year capital funding requirements. This system will enable OHC to properly allocate the additional $42 million in capital funding. A total of $110 million will be spent on capital improvements for OHC buildings in 1997 alone.

I would remind members opposite that it's a somewhat slippery slope they get on with the suggestion that the housing stock is in such neglected shape that the tenants should be overly concerned, because municipalities currently — and nothing is changed by this law — have a responsibility via their property standards officers to make sure every building, regardless of who owns it in this province, meets health and safety standards, make sure the elevators work, make sure all the fire equipment is in place and operational. If that isn't the case —

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** You fired all the inspectors, for God's sake. Who's going to check now?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston):** Order.

**Mr Gilchrist:** If the harpy opposite allows me to continue, if that isn't the case, with the greatest respect, the municipalities know that is really their obligation, and nothing in this bill changes that.

More to the point, it certainly belies the fact that over the last two years OHC has increased the amount it's spending on capital improvements. As a member who has one of the highest densities of public housing in the province in his riding, I'm very confident, having toured all these buildings, that health and safety concerns are being met, and in many respects the dollars we're allocating now will go towards — I don't want to say "unnecessary," but perhaps in some cases even more esoteric improvements, and by and large the health and safety issues are really not part of this debate at all.

In 1996 the province also instituted a benchmarking system for applying cost reductions to non-profit and cooperative housing providers. Using this system, inefficient providers had their budgets reduced to a greater extent than the lower-cost, more efficient providers. This more equitable method of funding was also applied in 1997; however, no overall reduction was implemented. Higher-cost providers were constrained, while the funding was provided to lower-cost providers. In other words, there is a tremendous incentive for cooperatives and non-profits to operate as efficiently as possible to ensure that their funding stream is maintained and quite frankly to serve as a benchmark to prove to all other co-ops and non-profits that it can be done.

I'm sure all of us have examples in our ridings of cooperatives that run very efficiently. I can think of one in my riding that gets the grand total of $25,000 a year as a subsidy, almost nothing. Out of that, they run undoubtedly, at least from my perspective, the most attractive, the best-maintained, the co-op with by far the greatest sense of community spirit of all the co-ops in my riding. So I know it can be done. We hope this benchmarking system will ensure that best practices will lead to all the other cooperatives following the lead of their own colleagues and delivering services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The province has also implemented tougher measures for dealing with housing projects that are in difficulty. In recent years, the province has transferred several non-profit housing projects to other providers, emphasizing that non-profit groups must adhere strictly to program requirements or risk losing their buildings. Again, these are all created under certain contracts. I don't think it's inappropriate for the taxpayers of the province to expect all parties to honour their commitments.

If there is a case where the partner in a non-profit or co-op has not met their financial obligations, I should also note the federal government has moved to deal very directly in those cases where there has been an absence of fiscal responsibility.

Significant savings are also being achieved through refinancing the entire non-profit housing portfolio. The ministry has put a process in place that requires financial institutions to compete on mortgage renewals. Substantial savings have been found because of lower interest rates, literally totalling in the hundreds of millions of dollars. As part of the reforms to the social housing program, the province is reviewing various options that will lower the risks associated with increased interest rates in the future. Where appropriate, the province has been locking in low interest rates on projects to minimize risk over a longer term.

In the public housing portfolio, savings have also been found through operational and cost efficiencies. Measures include re-engineering operations to streamline and reduce duplication, implementing energy efficiency measures to the extent we can and improving property management services, all the while reducing controllable expenses and implementing an asset management process which identifies and allocates capital funding based on the need and the condition of the portfolio.

**1540**

Reform of the entire process should ensure streamlined administration, eliminate duplication and overlap and increase efficiencies. Municipalities will have the flexibility to find savings through better business practices that address the needs of the people living in their own towns. All of this will help to achieve the most important goal of all: providing better service and better housing for people in need.

As well, undoubtedly the largest component of our social housing would be the Ontario Housing Corp, so I think it's appropriate that I take a couple of minutes to give you some background on the Ontario Housing Corp and what exactly will be happening to its various holdings.

Currently Ontario Housing Corp owns the province's 84,000 units of public housing, making it the largest landlord in Ontario and indeed the country. OHC also administers approximately 21,000 rent supplement units in which OHC subsidizes housing units in private, non-profit or co-op buildings, and subsidizes approximately 15,500 additional units owned by the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Co Ltd.

OHC is a provincial government agency established under the Ontario Housing Corporation Act. It currently receives its funding from two sources: rent from the tenants and subsidies from various levels of government, primarily provincial and federal.

The OHC board of directors is appointed by the provincial government and is accountable to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The board appoints a chief executive officer and a general manager to manage the corporation.

Fifty-four local housing authorities, though, located throughout the province are responsible for the day-to-day management of OHC's holdings, including here in Metro Toronto. It gets somewhat confusing because the local housing authority is called the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority, not to be confused with the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Co. These housing authorities are OHC's agents. The proposed Services Improvement Act would not change the relationship between the OHCs and the local housing authorities.

OHC provides housing for all types of low-income households, including families, senior citizens and single people. Its housing is made available on the basis of need and OHC houses many of Ontario's neediest households, with tenants paying rent based on income rather than on the size or the type of housing provided.

I should remind you that public housing is owned and managed by the province, just to differentiate that from non-profit housing and co-ops which are owned and managed by community groups or municipal providers. In the past two years OHC has focused on taking a more businesslike approach to its assets and its service delivery. While there is still a lot of work to be done, OHC has been getting more value for each taxpayer dollar by finding efficiencies within the organization. When the government decided that the delivery of public housing would be administered at the municipal level, OHC refocused its internal restructuring initiative on streamlining operations to prepare for this transfer.

What is OHC doing to maintain its housing stock? As I mentioned earlier, over the past five years alone, $513 million has been spent on capital improvements to its public housing stock. As a general rule, all these buildings were built before 1975 and clearly are at the midpoint of their economic life cycle in most cases. OHC recently developed an asset management system to report on the general condition of its housing stock and project its five-year capital funding requirements. This way it will know and will be able to demonstrate to the tenants as well as to the taxpayers that the dollars we've put in this year to top up to a total of $110 million will be spent on capital improvements appropriately.

What about the MTHA in particular here in Toronto? Following the KPMG review of the operations of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority assets, immediate steps were taken by MTHA to prioritize their work and remedy the identified problems. The high-priority work has been completed or is almost complete in all the buildings. Five million dollars was spent to accelerate fire code retrofit work and to replace elevators, one of the major deficiencies identified in the KPMG report. A total of $26 million was spent on capital improvements to the MTHA portfolio just last year alone. If that wasn't good enough, for 1997 MTHA has a budget of $45.4 million allocated for capital work as part of the recent provincial budget.

In total across the province, while MTHA is the largest provider, the social housing system, over and above public housing, has a total of 274,000 units, a staggering number. I mentioned already there were 84,000 units owned directly by the province. There are 57,000 municipal non-profit housing units owned by the municipalities, obviously, and 74,000 non-profit housing units owned directly by private non-profit corporations. There are 41,000 non-profit cooperative housing units owned directly by the co-op members themselves; 13,000 units are owned by the private sector in which the tenants' rent is subsidized by the province's rent supplement system; and there are 5,000 units developed under the rural native and urban native programs and owned by aboriginal groups. I'm pleased to note that the largest urban native program is located in the riding of Scarborough East, a fine housing project that goes by the name of Gabriel Dumont.

The federal and provincial governments each have a role in social housing. Social housing is funded and administered by both levels of government. The federal government unilaterally funds non-profits and cooperatives which are administered and controlled under contracts they signed, and that totals about 48,000 units. The Ontario Housing Corp is administered exclusively by the province, but we cost-share in some cases between the province and the federal government, and again to remind you, that's 84,000 of the units.

Federal-provincial non-profits and cooperatives are administered by the province but cost-shared again between the federal and provincial governments, for a total of 49,000 units. Provincial unilateral non-profits and co-ops are administered and funded solely by us, and that's 51,000 units. The remaining units include rent supplement and federal non-profits, privately owned, rural native and urban native, and again, in most cases, the funding is shared between the two levels of government.

In fact, in it's various incarnations, there have been something approaching almost 20 different housing programs over the years, which I think makes it very clear that this is an issue that needs consolidation. It needed a review from the bottom up, and I'm very pleased that over these past two years we have conducted just such a review and, as a result of that, have determined that municipalities are by far best capable of delivering on this important social component.

Again, just to highlight the difference between public housing and cooperative or non-profit housing, primarily it's different ownership. Public housing is owned, in most cases, directly by the provincial government, whereas the non-profits and the cooperatives are owned and operated by non-profit corporations. Our involvement is solely in writing a cheque, as is the federal government's. But the

day-to-day administration, the day-to-day operation, decisions about repairs and ongoing maintenance, decisions about any improvements or the purchase of any new equipment would be made exclusively by the non-profit or co-op board.

There's a very different history behind the two forms of public housing as well. Public housing was first built by municipalities. That's a fact that has been forgotten in this debate. In the 1960s the Ontario Housing Corp was created and took over title to what had previously been municipally owned housing buildings. It also took over the role for all future development and the setting of standards for public housing in this province.

In the mid-1970s, as a result of a report commissioned in 1973, a decision was made to cease building these large blocks of public housing that in many cases had not delivered on the true potential, had not delivered on what I think anyone with a social conscience would agree was the necessary integration of people who are living in those buildings. Instead, in some cases, they became ghettos. The sheer density of public housing that was put in any one place overwhelmed the ability of the services to keep pace, overwhelmed the ability of the rest of the municipality to embrace the public housing residents.

I've seen evidence of that in my own riding. Some of the buildings, quite frankly, were built with no public services nearby, quite some distance from schooling, and in almost no cases with access to recreational facilities and easy access to things like libraries. It's small wonder that particularly some of the youngsters in those buildings have found alternative expressions and alternative uses for their time over the years.

**1550**

I think the decision in the mid-1970s to no longer build that sort of high-density public housing project was quite valid. Instead we moved into the field of co-ops and non-profits. Non-profits were first sponsored by the federal government back in the 1970s, funded unilaterally by the federal government as well. In 1986 all of the provinces began participating. The province began sponsoring non-profit housing all by itself in 1987, so there's a clear distinction between the time when the federal government was involved exclusively, a very brief transitional period, and then since 1987 when the provincial government has been exclusively responsible for sponsoring any non-profit housing.

I should also note that back in the days when public housing was being built, it took a resolution of the local council before OHC was able to actually construct a building. I think that demonstrates to us and to anybody looking back on that history that the municipalities have traditionally played a role. If they didn't think it was appropriate to build public housing, they didn't pass that resolution and the province then didn't shove anything down their throat On the other hand, if they were anxious to get revenue, if they were anxious to see a particular site developed, if they thought it met whatever test they were submitting public housing to in terms of a balance within their community, then they would pass that resolution and the public housing project would go ahead.

Perhaps some of those decisions were not as well considered as they might have been, and the result has been spotty at best, but it cannot be said that municipalities have traditionally not had a role in social housing. They were the deliverer of social housing until the 1960s, they were the final arbiter about whether a housing project went ahead up until the mid-1970s, and it has quite frankly only been in the last two decades that the provincial government took away that input from the community and by and large was able to dictate and do an end run around the normal planning processes that would be put in place by a municipality.

You may know that one of the benchmarks that's always been used — in fact, the previous NDP government cited it very frequently in any discussion about public housing — is that a maximum of 8% of the housing units in any community should be public housing or government-subsidized, the thought being that with the revenue stream the municipalities needed for the integration of any group within our society, it was appropriate to set a benchmark.

I should tell you, in the riding of Scarborough East we're at over 25%, and there are many other communities in this province that are in the same boat and clearly outside the maximum that even the previous government, which always told us they had a monopoly on social conscience — they too ignored their own standard, and as a result communities like mine have been beset with a myriad of problems, problems primarily because at the end of the day the municipality had very few means through which they could stop a project going ahead in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. There are any number of examples in Scarborough of housing projects that were unilaterally opposed by the adjacent community, not on the basis of NIMBYism — not in my backyard — but because the local services were not designed to handle the extraordinary increase in density.

I can think of one project in particular that was zoned for 12 single-family homes. Instead we have just shy of 100 units that were built there. There are 100 families with children using the school and obviously using all the other infrastructure in that community. The school just wasn't built — when the official plan was done, the design was for those 12 homes.

The unwillingness of the provincial governments in these last two decades to accept at face value that the municipalities should have the final, in fact perhaps the sole, say in whether or not housing is built in a particular spot has created a number of problems. We believe that one of the side benefits to the rationalization in the transfer of all these services between the municipalities and the province will be that once again municipalities will be the masters in their own house. They will have that ability, both in their official plan and through their normal planning process, to make sure the needs of their community are reflected appropriately.

Everyone accepts that if there is a shortage of affordable housing, there is a role to be played by the state in one of its forms. We believe the municipality is the appropriate level of government best able to manage that balancing act, best able to recognize need when it's created and best able to ensure that the balance within its community is reflected through good planning practices.

As I mentioned earlier, public housing is older. It's all at least 22 years old. In some cases it dates back to the 1960s and in a couple of cases here in downtown Toronto back into the mid-1950s. It therefore needs more capital upgrades than the newer stock which tends to be the non-profits and the co-ops. The non-profit housing is not in need of major capital expenditures, but we have restored $215 million to their capital reserves, money that was drained away by the previous NDP government. We're very happy to make sure they'll have the flexibility in the years to come to meet the capital needs as their buildings age. We're not going to beggar them, in fact just the opposite. We're making sure they have the dollars available today even though many of these expenditures won't be taking place for five, 10, even more years into the future.

Social housing is subsidized in a number of ways. First off, government pays the difference between the costs, such as the mortgage, the operating costs, the maintenance, capital repairs, taxes, on the one hand, and the rents received from the tenants, on the other. That difference is paid to the provider, so in the case of pure public housing it would be paid to the local housing authority; in the case of a non-profit or co-op, those dollars are paid to the non-profit or co-op board of directors.

There are actually two different subsidies, and this is where it gets quite complicated because there is what's called the RGI subsidy, rent geared to income. Most of the people who live in social housing pay a rent that is geared to their income. For these people the government is subsidizing the difference between 30% of their income and the rent they would have to pay in the private sector, or what's called market rent. If based on your income you're only able to pay — well, believe it or not, the minimum — and there are many cases — is $32 a month. Some tenants in public housing are paying as little as $32 a month, and the difference between that and the cost of the market rents, what an apartment would rent for in that community, is the RGI subsidy, rent-geared-to-income subsidy. But over and above that there's a difference in those non-profits and the co-ops between what the market rent would be and what the actual carrying cost of the building is.

I'm sure in the run-up to the last election — and it probably was grist for more than one question at an all-candidates' meeting — all of us heard horror stories about some of the abuses going on in the construction of what's euphemistically called non-profit housing. It may be non-profit for the operators but it was certainly profit for many of the consultants and advisers and speculators. The bottom line was that at the same time the private sector everywhere in this province was building housing at a cost of $100 a square foot, you could take it as a given that every single non-profit that was built and funded by the previous government was done at $200 a square foot, bang on double what it cost the real world to build. The difference, quite frankly, as was revealed in a number of scandals in years gone by, went to consultants and advisers and speculators that flipped land a half-dozen times before selling it to the non-profit.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gilchrist:** That was the NDP, the previous government, you're right. The bottom line is, there is now a tremendous difference between what the market rent would be in a community, let's say, in my community of Scarborough East where an average rent would be in the neighbourhood of $700 a month, and what the carrying cost of the co-op or the non-profit is. In most cases they're up in the $1,500-a-month range. Not only do we subsidize the individual, the RGI subsidy, we subsidize the actual bricks and mortar. They're each about $1 billion, a staggering amount of money. Again, at a time when hard-working people in this province struggle to pay their mortgage every month, these excesses that they saw in years gone by were quite galling and, I have no doubt, contributed to the strength of our election, certainly in the ridings in Scarborough, where we've seen some really bad examples of some of these excesses in the early part of this decade.

**1600**

The second subsidy, by the way, is known as the bridge subsidy. As I say, it addresses the difference between what everyone in the building, if they were paying market rent, would be contributing and what the province would still have to pay to pay the mortgage, the operating costs, the day-to-day operations of that building.

Let's deal with some of those costs, if I may. Funding for the social housing system in Ontario: The cost last year was $1.45 billion, which is cost-shared with the federal government. The breakdown is as follows: In 1996-97 OHC, including the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Co Ltd — I'll remind you that that's a slightly different iteration of a local housing authority that operates here in Toronto — cost $352 million, of which the federal government contributed $211 million. But non-profit housing costs were $1 billion last year, of which the federal government contributed just over 30%: $321 million. In aggregate, then, the cost to the provincial government was just shy of $900 million last year. In fairness, the federal government paid the balance.

As you may know, the federal government has indicated, and has already signed agreements with a number of the other provinces, that they want to get out of the housing business. Much like Minister Allan Rock's admission that the health cuts have hurt the province of Ontario — and he has taken full responsibility for the fact that the federal government has downloaded over $2.5 billion on to this province, which has complicated our health costs.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** They're going to pay all that back.

**Mr Gilchrist:** It was a fine admission for Mr Rock. Oh, that others of his colleagues would be so forthright.

But while at the same time they've already signed agreements with provinces such as Saskatchewan that specifically on their face give the province the ability to transfer its housing stock in turn to their municipalities, it became an election football before the federal election. It played very well as part of the overall bash-the-government theme for the federal members, having already been party to all these other contracts with the other provinces, to apply a different standard to Ontario. We shouldn't be surprised. Again Ontario gets the short end of the stick. But when you've got 101 votes to appease, I could see why the housing minister decided to follow a different path.

Right now, we're in an interesting situation, because they made an offer to walk away from their annual expenses on all the housing component that quite frankly would have saddled the taxpayers of this province with billions of dollars' worth of increased costs.

I don't know what the ultimate conclusion will be, but we find it totally unacceptable, since both governments are a party to the contracts behind all these funding arrangements — if the federal government wants to disentangle social housing, as we have in certain issues with the municipalities, it's got to be revenue-neutral. That's the minimum standard the taxpayers of this province should expect, and we will stand up for their interests in that regard.

I hope at the end of the day the federal government recognizes its responsibility to all the citizens of this country and recognizes the fact that it is inappropriate to sign one contract with Saskatchewan and Quebec and a number of other provinces and apply a different standard here. The bottom line is that we expect nothing more but also nothing less than what is being offered to the other citizens of this great country.

Social housing tenants, if I can give you just a feel of the demographics, as I mentioned earlier, run the whole spectrum. Families, seniors and single households all live in social housing in this province. In the Ontario Housing Corp, about one-half of the tenant households are families, about one third are seniors and one sixth are singles. In non-profit housing, the proportion of families is even higher, 60% of the units, while seniors make up 20% and singles the balance.

These households have lower incomes, from social assistance, pensions or just lower-paying work. Approximately 60,000 tenants in social housing also receive social assistance. This is 36% of the rent-geared-to-income units. The average income of people not on social assistance is approximately $13,000 a year. Up to 10% of the units in social housing are occupied by special needs tenants, tenants who require some level of essential support services to live in the community instead of an institution, and we believe that is an appropriate expenditure. These clients would include frail elderly, physically and mentally handicapped persons, consumers of mental health services. The OHC houses a significant number of tenants who have lived in units for a long period of time. Support services are funded for these groups by the Ministry of Community and Social Services as well as by the Ministry of Health through community-based agencies.

If I could just make a brief comment about legal and financial commitments, I've already talked about how discussions with the federal government are under way to establish an agreement which would unilaterally pass control — their choice would be to pass it to us — to anchor federal dollars and to provide flexibility to devolve the social housing to municipalities.

Operating agreements with non-profit and co-operative housing providers govern the actual payments of subsidies to non-profit and co-operative housing. It's got to be remembered that non-profit housing is owned by the non-profit groups and at the end of the day there's approximately $1 billion in debentures against OHC property.

One of the things that is not widely known is that in the course of getting involved in public housing, previous governments, particularly the previous NDP and Liberal governments, bought a lot of what are euphemistically known as scattered units. Most people in this province aren't aware that there are 5,800 single-family homes and duplexes owned by the province of Ontario, including houses down the Beach area of Toronto valued at $380,000. Clearly that was not an appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars. That was not an appropriate expenditure. That was not an appropriate way to deal with housing problems, no matter where you were in the province of Ontario. It was absolute wastefulness and quite frankly has contributed to the extraordinarily high cost of social housing in this province. Per unit, our highest costs are in those scattered units. I think it will be incumbent upon the municipalities in the years to come to rationalize that ownership, and I would encourage them to do that.

At the end of the day, if I can come back to the original point, the bill before us now, Bill 152, is the end of a long discussion process that started back in January of this year. Working with the municipalities, receiving input from a variety of groups — including even opposition members, although mostly critical — we've put together a piece of legislation that guarantees that the transfer of services will allow the province and the municipalities to be more efficient, will allow the municipalities in particular to find cost savings, to ensure that the services are still delivered, that there is no cost increase to the taxpayers, no property tax increase, and at the end of the day the taxpayers will know that there is one authority dealing with each service. This makes for a more efficient, a more effective Ontario, and we think it's excellent legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I wish to respond to the member by saying that there isn't anybody in this House who, in his heart of hearts, doesn't know what this bill is all about. It's downloading the responsibility and the costs, the burdens, on the local municipalities while the provincial government accepts credit for its provincial income tax cut.

I think Hazel McCallion, the mayor of the city of Mississauga, put it best when she was speaking after one

of the discussions with the Premier and the minister. She said that's what it was all about. She said, "Mike Harris and the Conservative caucus want to look very popular with the people, so they will go out and say, 'We have cut your taxes by 30%,'" eventually. But of course that is going to cost the government the revenue, approximately $5 billion a year, that would be generated by those taxes, and they are offloading on to the municipalities new and onerous responsibilities which the municipal elected representatives will have to deal with at the local level.

**1610**

They'll have two choices, or perhaps a combination of choices. One is to cut services even further — and these municipalities have already gone through the process of cutting a lot of services — or, second, they will have to raise taxes to maintain those services. Meanwhile, Mike Harris and members of the Conservative caucus can smile and send out their brochures and put their ads in their paper and have their radio reports on CHSC in St Catharines, all saying, "Isn't it nice what the provincial government is doing for you?" when in fact the local elected representatives, as many of the members heard at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario convention here in Toronto, will be left with the tough decisions. I remind you of gas prices. They want to do nothing about it except push the responsibility to somebody else.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Always interesting indeed, and at times challenging, to listen to the remarks by the member for Scarborough East. He's such a believer. The truth is — and he wishes to convey that there's a devolving exercise — this is downloading, this is dumping, this is passing the buck. That's the truth. Call it like it is.

You may be aware that $476 million of federal taxpayers' money leaves Ottawa and comes back to the province of Ontario for social housing. That deal is in jeopardy because what the province does is it takes the $476 million that they owe and then they dump the cost of social housing on to municipalities, telling them, "You're on your own now." When you say it's a wash, it breaks even, no one believes you.

Today, September 2, the people of Thunder Bay — and they do their own accounting, their good local clerk-administrators: between $44.9 and $47.4 million — are asking you, member, and your cohorts, "Show us the money." Do you want to give them the guarantee? Because that's what it will cost them. Put it where your mouth is. Where is the money? The only way they will break even is when they tally up the bills and they find the cheque in the mail and it clears the bank. Otherwise, they will believe that you are lying. There is $47 million missing for the good people of Thunder Bay, and the list goes on and on in most municipalities.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I'm going to respond to the members for Chatham-Kent and Scarborough East for their comments. It's really interesting of course to hear people in this House say, "Show us the money, give us the money." That's what the last two governments did for 10 years and we have a $100-billion debt to show for it.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** They threw it away, out the doors and windows.

**Mrs Marland:** We not only have a $100-billion debt —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** You knew where it was.

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you, Minister — we also have auditors' reports in the last 10 years which identified in one area more than any other money that was never accounted for. The Provincial Auditor identified in his 1994 report $200 million in the Ministry of Housing that could not be accounted for.

What about the Van Lang Centre in Ottawa? I don't think the previous government really wants us to talk about that. That's where a certain group operated this centre with a very closed board of directors, five people who self-appointed themselves and reappointed themselves every year, and kept empty apartments for their friends who came to visit from overseas. This is not a subject that anybody of the Liberal or New Democratic parties opposite should ever venture into.

What about subsidizing brand-new bachelor apartments for $2,000 a month at the same time that bachelor apartments were advertised in the Toronto dailies, three and four columns, at $400 a month? You talk about money, you talk about downloading, you talk about responsible spending, and that's what our government's going to do.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** To the member for Scarborough East, first, let's acknowledge the facts, as the government did today: You've dumped $660 million of extra costs on municipalities. The minister acknowledged that today. You've cut out the municipal support grant of $666 million, so you've dumped $660 million on to property tax, and Ontario is going to know that. They understand how you're funding your tax cut. You're dumping on the municipalities.

Second, let's recognize the Who Does What panel, 14 people hand-picked by the Premier. They said to the government, "Don't do this." I'll use their language: "The panel strongly opposes such a move," moving social housing on to property tax. "We are unanimous in the view that of the choice between placing education or welfare on to the property tax, including housing, it's clearly preferable to continue to rely on the property for the funding of education." So the Who Does What panel says don't do it.

AMO, the association of municipalities, right here says don't dump housing on to the property taxpayers. Why? For the very reasons the member for Scarborough East outlined today. He went through the problems of social housing. There is a huge problem with the deterioration of the capital stock, the buildings. Furthermore he goes on to say — I'm paraphrasing — many of the buildings are falling apart. He says the non-profits are way short of being able to carry the cost. There are huge problems in

housing. That's what the member for Scarborough East said.

So what are you doing? You've chosen this moment to dump it on to the property tax. You've made your own best case for the mistake of putting on to property tax what rightfully should be on the provincial responsibility. You're dumping a problem on to the property taxpayers and you'll pay at the next election.

**Mr Carroll:** I appreciate the comments from the members for Mississauga South, St Catharines, Lake Nipigon and Scarborough-Agincourt. I'm surprised the member for Scarborough-Agincourt today finally came to the realization that we are asking municipalities to find $667 million worth of savings in how they deliver services. We have not been shy about admitting to that. That has been part of the program since we were elected, so I'm surprised that just today he came to the realization that we were doing that.

As usual, the opposition members continue to argue for the status quo. When both of those parties were in power, they understood and tried to come to grips with the fact that the relationship between the province and the municipalities should change, that there needed to be more efficient ways to deliver government services for the benefit of the taxpayer. It did involve making some very difficult decisions, which both of those previous governments shied away from. We no longer have the option of shying away from those difficult decisions. We are faced with capital stock in social housing that is in difficult condition. We are faced with $100 billion worth of debt. We are faced with the fact that we have the highest tax load in North America. We must come to grips with some of the areas where we're wasting money.

They argue for the status quo. Everything we bring forward as an initiative they say won't work. The sky has been falling since June 1995. I woke up this morning; it was still in the same place. It has not fallen. Ontario quite frankly is starting to benefit from some of our decisions. We must continue to move forward. The Who Does What exercise is an exercise to allow municipalities the tools to better deliver government services to their taxpayers so that all taxpayers in Ontario can enjoy a reduction in their tax burden.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**1620**

**Mr Phillips:** I wonder if I could get unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Interjection:** You don't need it.

**Mr Phillips:** I don't need it? Well, I've got it; I appreciate it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Phillips:** I want to begin the debate on this bill by —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Phillips:** I'll split my time with the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

I begin by saying that this bill is a mistake. I use the Premier's own handpicked panel, the Who Does What panel, because if the public has been watching this debate, the government says, "We're implementing what the Who Does What panel recommended." Remember, Mike Harris handpicked them. David Crombie headed it up, but there were 13 other individuals from across the province to look at this whole disentanglement between municipalities and the province.

Certainly our party is very supportive of finding ways so we make government simpler, we make it more efficient, we make it work better, we increase accountability. But here's what happened. The government made a huge mistake, and Dave Crombie and his panel, the Who Does What panel handpicked by Mike Harris, some of the most senior well-respected people in the province — the reason I'm raising this is that this bill puts into law what David Crombie and his panel say is a mistake.

They specifically said: "It has become clear to us, however, that the only way the province could carry out its funding responsibilities as recommended by the panel would be to undo much of the work accomplished by the disentangling proposals such as moving health and welfare back down to the property tax. The panel strongly opposes such a move." They're unanimous in the view that it shouldn't be done. For the public, when you're listening to the government say one thing and the opposition another, who should you listen to? I suggest that an independent group you perhaps should listen to is the Who Does What panel. They say this is wrong. It's a huge mistake.

Second, AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says it's wrong. We've had now the government acknowledge clearly without any question, Premier Harris has said this is revenue-neutral. "The stuff we're doing in municipalities is revenue-neutral." Today we had an admission it's not revenue-neutral. The government is adding $660 million on to property taxes.

**Mr Bradley:** That's not revenue-neutral.

**Mr Phillips:** That's not revenue-neutral, as my friend from St Catharines says. They're adding $660 million on to property tax. That alone is about a 5% increase in property taxes. The government has finally acknowledged that today, "Yes, we are adding $660 million." That's why AMO said, "Don't put social housing on to property tax; it is a mistake."

We've got the Crombie panel, AMO. The third group — or person — is the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach. I was listening the other morning to an interview with Mr Leach on a radio station. They said, "Isn't it a mistake to put income redistribution programs on to property tax?" and social housing and social assistance is an income redistribution program. Al Leach said: "Yes, it is. They should not be on property tax. My own personal belief, they should be on the income tax."

The interviewer, quite correctly, said to Mr Leach: "Wait a minute. You're doing the opposite. You are putting income redistribution programs on to property tax." Mr Leach said: "Yes, but you can't get where we want to go in a day. Eventually it will be back on income tax, but we've got to put it on property tax for a while." Well, I say to the people of Ontario, if he believes that income redistribution programs such as social housing and social

assistance should not be on property tax, what are we doing? Why are we passing this law that puts it on to property tax?

Anybody who wants a tape of that interview, it's available. Mr Leach would not deny he said that, and he himself acknowledged it's a mistake to put on to property tax these programs. As a matter of fact, I would challenge the government to produce for the Legislature a single study that has been done on social housing that says it should be on to property tax.

I keep quoting the government itself. I can remember August 6, 1997, when the government put out a backgrounder on the programs. They said, "People who need services cross municipal boundaries to get them," and that's why income redistribution programs, by the minister's own admission, should be not on property tax where somebody will move from one community to another for the services, but on a province-wide revenue base. The government itself points that out.

Today we are dealing with a proposal that puts into law something that Dave Crombie and his Who Does What handpicked panel strongly oppose, bitterly oppose I might add. I remember very well when Crombie and his group got wind of this coming out — this document's dated December 23, two days before Christmas. They felt it so urgent that they gathered together just before Christmas when they got wind of this and put together a letter to Mr Leach imploring him not to do it. Mr Leach allowed them to have a press conference roughly 24 hours before New Year's Eve — I remember that well as well — to try and bury their concerns.

You've got the Who Does What panel saying the government's wrong. You've got AMO saying the government's wrong, saying that in spite — and periodically here in the Legislature you will hear the government say, "We've accepted AMO's proposal." That is simply — tread carefully here, Mr Speaker — simply not true.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** It's incorrect.

**Mr Phillips:** It's incorrect. AMO said, "Do not put social housing on to the property tax." If we are looking for disentanglement, which is what I think prompted this exercise in the first place, the Who Does What panel, you can hardly imagine a more complicated process than the one we're now into. This has not been disentanglement; it has been re-entanglement.

I'll just go down the list: On education, we now find the province is going to set the mill rate. For the first time in the history of Ontario, we now have the provincial government setting one third of the property tax mill rate. The government has made an all-out attack on getting their hands on property taxes. One third of our property taxes in Ontario will now be set, not by your locally elected people, not in the strong tradition of Ontario where we elect people locally, people we have confidence in, we have access to, to provide our local services.

But for the first time ever, the province is now going to set one third of our property tax mill rate. Every time you get a property tax bill now, the province will have set —

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's finally under control.

**Mr Phillips:** We've now got a member over here who is saying he likes it. He likes setting the property tax mill rate. I'll say to the people of Ontario that we're now seeing the true face of Mike Harris which is: Bigger is better; control at Queen's Park is better; we know best at Queen's Park; centralization. We'll set one third of the mill rate this year and maybe more in the future."

You want to look at re-entanglement. You've got that. You look now at health care — and virtually everybody who has looked at health care believes we have to find a way to integrate the whole system, make it a seamless system. The jargon that's used in the health community is: We have these silos: You've got the doctor silo and you've got the hospital silo and you've got the drug silo and you've got the home care silo. We need to tear those silos down and we need to manage the system as a seamless system.

I think there's a lot of merit in that, but what are we doing here by this very bill? Now municipalities will have 100% responsibility for ambulances and 100% responsibility for public health. If you look down the road at health care, much more community-based care where I think the ambulances are going to become more important as people do far more day surgery and are transported home by ambulance — far more living in their home but are transported by ambulance for some clinical services — what should be happening is a completely integrated system of health care. But we're building another silo where the municipalities now will have responsibility for ambulances and public health, so rather than disentangling health care, we are re-entangling health care.

**1630**

I know how we got into this mess. Mike Harris wants to control education. His office has been just salivating at the chance to be in complete control of that education system, and they are going to be. January 1 they're going to set the budget for every school board and whoever controls the purse strings — you can be guaranteed we will see province-wide bargaining with the teachers and then, dare I say, with the rest of the staff, because there's going to be only one body setting the whole budget for every school board. It is complete central control of the education system, and the Premier, in my opinion, is spoiling for a fight with the teachers.

But that decision was made before the government looked at the ramifications. When you take a substantial portion of education off property taxes, you are determined to add a substantial portion of other costs on to them.

That decision was made before you looked at the consequences of putting things like ambulance services on the property tax, or social housing on the property tax; a huge portion of social assistance, $853 million more in social assistance on to property tax; $905 million of social housing on to property tax. But the government made the decision that it wanted to control education and as soon as it made that decision, then we were down that path of

putting on to property tax a large portion of social assistance and social housing.

Again, it's just fundamentally wrong. It is a public policy decision being driven by a political imperative to take control of education. That is not how we should be making public policy in Ontario. We should look at the consequences of this.

I can guarantee you that when we run into a difficult economic time — and we always do, unfortunately; the economy of every province and every country goes through cycles — can you imagine how traumatic it will be for our seniors on social housing, for children on social assistance to be going before a council that is faced with a terrible dilemma? How do we provide these services that will clearly go up dramatically in an economic downturn? But in an economic downturn, businesses fail, individuals have real difficulty in paying their property taxes, and there will be those meetings where councils will be put in an absolute no-win position.

But that's what we're approving today. We're approving a public policy in which I challenge the government to come forward with any credible body that has studied this and recommended the government's course of action.

I repeat what I said at the outset of my remarks. I think most people in the Legislature, probably all people in the Legislature, have a good deal of respect for David Crombie. He has proven himself to be an individual who understands issues, a former federal member, a former mayor of the city of Toronto, someone who has actually done work with all governments of different political stripes here in Ontario. His group felt so strongly that two days before Christmas they got together and they begged the government not to proceed with this. AMO has spent the last few months saying, "Listen, you are dumping on to the property taxpayers a substantial extra cost."

Here's what the government does on that, by the way. They said: "Well, we know it's $660 million more dollars, but we told them we were going to do that before, so you can't count that. We told them that a few months ago. They already knew that, so it's not part of the exercise."

AMO will just say to the property taxpayers, "The government has finally come clean and said, 'Yes, in 1998 there will be roughly $660 million of extra costs put on the property taxpayer.'" Then the government says: "Yes, but they can handle that just by reducing their expenditures 2% a year. That's no problem for them. They can do that."

Based on my experience with municipalities, they have been operating with a very sharp pencil for a long period of time. I know a lot of the mayors and reeves and wardens around the province in large communities, small communities, who have been operating with a really sharp pencil. Frankly, they find it a bit insulting for the Premier to say: "Well, just go out and cut. You can find another 2% each year for the next three or four years. You can cut another 7% to 10% out of your budget. No problem at all."

I'd like Mike Harris to go to a few of those council meetings where the councils are debating: "What services do we now cut? What new fees do we bring in?" I think I've told this story before. The local fire department in my area charges for false alarms. We've got a seniors' building where the alarm system is up to code, but when people are cooking and what not, it goes off and they're faced with about a $3,000 bill over a three-month period for false alarms. Why? Because my local council, faced with the cutbacks from the province, has had to turn to these fees. I don't think there's a municipality in the province that hasn't introduced some very interesting new fees to try to make up for the cuts by the province.

Before I turn it over to my colleague, I just want to reiterate our concerns with the bill. Number one is that, from a public policy point of view, surely the government will listen to David Crombie and the Who Does What panel, will listen to AMO, will even listen to Mr Leach, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who said, "Yes, it is wrong to put income redistribution programs on to property tax, and eventually we'll get it off." Why are we putting in legislation something that he thinks is wrong?

Secondly, the member for Scarborough East gave perhaps one of the best explanations of why the government is determined to push this through. He points out that buildings are collapsing so there's going to be a huge capital investment. Many of the non-profit buildings are so far from being able to carry themselves that the province had better get rid of them and give them to the municipalities as quickly as possible. He added a new one that I hadn't hear before and that is that maybe the local council will be less willing to provide social housing than the province has been in the past.

So for all of those reasons, I think it's a bill that is a mistake and patching it up in small ways doesn't change the principle: that, in principle, it's wrong to put on to property tax income redistribution programs, and it's going to be particularly wrong when the province runs into difficult economic times and our property taxpayers are faced with an intolerable dilemma. Do we provide for the essential social services in our community or do we hold the line on property taxes? Very difficult future decisions that we are incorporating in this his bill.

**1640**

**Mrs Pupatello:** I'm very pleased to speak to Bill 152, which does make significant changes in how Ontarians pay for social programs in Ontario. What we saw when we had this bill introduced was that for all the words of consultation the government claims to have had with all these people across Ontario, they in fact listened to no one. We're probably seeing the same thing happen today as labour leaders from across Ontario meet with the Premier, finally, in some kind of show of consultation. The truth is that there is really no point in going and asking people their opinion if the government then is not prepared to listen to people who are on the front line when it starts to implement and bring in legislation that affects them very directly.

It's important to note that decades ago cities right across Ontario used to be responsible for social programs, and welfare is a good example of that. In the Great De-

pression, cities like Windsor where I come from, cities right across Ontario were going bankrupt because they could not afford the social programs any longer.

If I could explain, and I know members here are aware, when you are in a region that is simply not thriving economically the reality is that people will move to go and find opportunity. For those very same reasons, you will find a significantly greater proportion of people in Metro Toronto who are in need of social programs. These are the same people who may have come from outside, from other regions, from rural communities. When they don't have opportunities in their own regions, people will move looking for opportunity, and ultimately, if they don't find that opportunity, they turn to the city they happen to be in to look for that kind of assistance.

Metro Toronto, the city of Windsor and the city of Ottawa for a very long time have had a very disproportionate number in relation to their surrounding counties in having to provide social programs right across Ontario for those people who live there.

When we started this kind of discussion in the city I come from, Windsor-Sandwich, there was significant concern. They said, "Listen, the city of Windsor in relation to Essex county has certainly a higher proportion of individuals who need things like social housing." So over the years Windsor has developed more programs of social housing in relation or ratio to the balance of Essex county.

When the province now decides to dump this program on to cities and towns across Ontario, urban centres are hit in a very big way with this program, far more than other surrounding areas, although they are all being hit.

Some time ago, within the last three weeks, the government in its wisdom all of a sudden decided that they would now pool those social services right across the greater Toronto area. The reason they did that was they saw that Metro Toronto had a huge, disproportionate number of social programs available for its citizens. All of a sudden, the Metro MPPs were getting screams from people in their own backyards saying: "How can you let this happen? It's not logical. You're from a gang who purport to be for common sense. This bill doesn't make any sense. What the government is doing in moving and dumping those services doesn't make good sense."

So for the very same reasons that decades ago those programs were taken off the responsibility of cities and towns and put on to the province, this government has now decided to share those social services across the greater Toronto area. I have got to submit to this group that this same logic should apply in a larger fashion across Ontario, and in fact we have had very good reason for the province to be involved in social services.

I have to say that when it comes time to determine what kind of representative you want to be and why you should even be interested in running as a provincial member, what we always knew is that if you are an MPP in Ontario, you have a responsibility for ensuring provincial programs like social services, education, housing, all the things that matter to people in everyday life, day-to-day things that impact on people. That's your job as MPPs and here you are. The majority of you got here and decided: "Gee, that problem is just too big for me to handle. I'm going to dump that on to cities and towns." That's exactly what you have done.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Caused by the previous government.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Je pense aussi que la communauté francophone est d'accord avec moi, Monsieur.

I have to say too that we got called back to the House this mid-August because you had such important things to talk about, you had such grave issues to be dealt with, and all of a sudden I get a sense that you're starting to backpedal a little bit. We hear screaming outside all the protesters, who I think are very supportive of the Liberal position here.

In fact, the MPPs would prefer to be right here in this House instead of being back home in their own ridings, because they went home during the month of July and the government MPPs were in for quite a shock. All of a sudden you started hearing the same things, not by local Liberals but by your local Conservatives. Your local Conservatives couldn't believe that you are continuing down this path even though they have done absolutely everything to try to convince you that where you were going was wrong.

Self-proclaimed, your handpicked group in this whole downloading exercise told you not to do it, and today we're discussing Bill 152 and government MPPs now stand in the House and say, "They're telling us to do that." There's not one person who would ever confirm that, not one of your group, because unanimously they banded together to write you a letter to say, "Don't do this." You don't want to listen to that, but you now have the gall to stand in the House and say that you have consulted. You certainly had them speaking to you, but you clearly were not listening or you simply wouldn't have done it. Now we're going to have problems, but they won't be yours; they're going to be cities' and towns' problems. You think you'll go away with this big image of being the big Taxfighter. The reality is you're going to see tax increases at local levels, and if you don't see that, you will have services disrupted or cancelled. Those are the options that municipal leaders across Ontario have today. We wonder.

You make a show of having all these people supporting you in what you're doing. We don't quite know where they are. You certainly have members here from the Niagara region, and they're saying, "We'll leave Niagara taxpayers up to $60 million in the red." Are the Niagara MPPs in fact not listening to their local people on the front line who are going to be faced with delivering these services? In Sudbury they're saying the impact in Sudbury and its area is approximately $73.6 million.

Don't forget, these municipalities are only giving us numbers that they know, because the minister has admitted to AMO just last week that he doesn't have the numbers yet. How can you possibly stand here and say you're going to have revenue-neutral exchange when the government won't release the figures if in fact they even have the figures?

Sudbury recognizes it will be in a major deficit.

The city of Windsor finally — I say "finally" because quite frankly you've put municipal leaders in quite a position. They're in a position to bite the hand that feeds them. If they speak out too loudly, you control the purse strings and these municipal leaders are afraid that maybe they're going to get shafted in some other area because they're just not playing along. They're just not being cooperative and spewing the government line for you. In fact, Mayor Hurst of the city of Windsor is significantly concerned; more so, the fellow who actually manages the books for the city of Windsor, Chuck Wills, our CAO. "'No matter how we cut it we now know the order of magnitude we're dealing with,' said Chuck Wills, city chief administrative officer."

These are people who have been in this business for a long time. Chuck Wills is renowned. In fact, we all know — it was in our press — that the city of Toronto and area was trying to bring this gentleman up here to work. This fellow knows his business.

Here are the options: "It would mean a 12% tax hike for Windsor property owners if the city chose to fill the shortfall that way." The only other alternative is cutting service.

This is not a Liberal MPP saying this. These are people who work with this on a daily basis. Surely when you were home over the course of your four or six weeks they must have been telling you the same thing. It's not an issue solely in the city of Windsor. The northwest, the Thunder Bay people, are telling you the same thing. Clearly these people who were up in the northern caucus and having their meetings up there heard the same message. I'm sure they're not singing from a different song sheet just for us. "Thunder Bay ratepayers could be facing property tax increases and/or service cuts 'of significant proportion.'" Are we the only ones who are hearing this? I don't know what kind of consultation you could possibly have done.

Even in Ottawa-Carleton, an $82-million shortfall, and I have to tell you these people still don't know what your housing figures are.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** That's not what Bob Chiarelli said.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I'd like to know how this member for Nepean, representing the area in the region of Ottawa, could sit in the House and be positive about Bill 152 when his own government will not give out information about housing. How can you possibly sit there and talk to me about this when your own government will not give out figures?

**1650**

**Mr Baird:** On two points of order, Mr Speaker: One is with respect to standing order 22(a), where remarks are supposed to be addressed through the Chair and not directly to the members opposite.

My second point of order would be to remind her, I'm in complete agreement with Bob Chiarelli, the former Liberal MPP.

**Mrs Pupatello:** There's no point being sensitive. Speaker, if the members opposite are going to continue to try to speak out as if they're in opposition, then they too are going to be subject to my railing against their comments. In this case, we have government MPPs who purport to be in favour of this and they too have to agree that their own municipalities to do not even know the cost of social housing that they have now dumped on municipalities. So how can you decide that it's revenue-neutral when you don't even know the number?

I would ask every member on the government side who has spoken to this bill so far to stand up and tell me today, what is the amount of social housing for the city of Windsor? What about Tecumseh, in the by-election? I know what I am hearing in the city of Tecumseh. The people in the city of Tecumseh want to know who is going to pay the cost of ambulance. Gary McNamara goes to the door and the people want to know who eventually is going to pay when the city of Tecumseh, that town in Windsor-Riverside, is faced with the dumping of ambulance service.

Government MPPs have no answer for that. So for them to sit here cock-sure of everything their government is doing and all they say is, "I'm shocked and appalled at how ill-informed you are" — is this government honestly going to say it hasn't made a mistake since it's been in government yet? I would beg to differ on several counts.

"Suburban Councillor Warns of '905 Tea Party' Rebellion." I don't see any 905 MPPs jumping for joy, now that you realize you're going to have those social costs shared across the GTA. I wonder why that is. Is it because the GTA is going to pay for the share of social housing programs that is serviced in the city of Toronto? Of course that's why the GTA MPPs are not here. They're not happy about what's going on with Bill 152.

The minister has already decided they're going to share across the GTA. That's the very reason it's supposed to be shared across the province, so that you don't have one region paying more than other regions for social programs that clearly are of a nature that should not be borne by property taxes in Ontario. That should be clear to all of you.

As your minister already acknowledged, that shouldn't be, yet you are so clearly driven for your tax cut by a certain period of time, you will stop at nothing, no matter how illogical the path is, to try to find your money to feed that. Instead of making changes in a very appropriate manner, you've put the cart before the horse again.

Right through Bill 152 you've acknowledged, as has your member, the PA to the minister of Comsoc, that after the bill is passed you're going to have consultation about what the mandates are for those services. Don't you think you ought to determine what changes you're going to make to the mandate before you dump them on to the cities and towns?

The municipal leaders of Chatham-Kent surely want to know exactly what that mandate is going to entail. What are you telling the people in public health they have to provide, now that they're paying for it? First you hand

them the invoice, "Here, pay the bill for public health," then you're going to enter into consultation. If it's consultation the way you've done over the last two and a half years, the cities can just forget having any real say about what their regions may need in the order of public health.

Then you're going to decide what it's going to be. As Chuck Wills from the city of Windsor said to me some time ago, the bane of cities and towns in Ontario is unfunded mandates from the province of Ontario. Here we go again. The funny thing is, from a most unlikely source, from the gang that's purported to be the big taxfighters, you will be bloating the local property tax in a way that has nothing to do with levels of income. In fact, it is quite regressive. But we should carry on.

We've got people from North Bay. If you thought our Premier would be on steady ground in terms of his policymaking, you would think it would be with the people of North Bay and the civic leaders of North Bay. Surely, they wouldn't tell the Premier of Ontario something that isn't so. But here we have from the North Bay Nugget the people saying to Premier Mike Harris, "Hey, you're going to raise our local property taxes." His answer is, "You can find the savings."

One day you have speakers at your association of municipalities meeting and you're just lauding them with compliments on how wonderful they are, and aren't they terrific, and they're really good fiscal managers, and the next day you're in the House telling them they're terrible and they've got so much fat they're going to have to cut out of the system. You can't have it both ways. Either they're terrible money managers — bloated, fat bureaucracies — or they're very sound fiscal managers.

In my estimate, I would say they're quite sound. In the city of Windsor we've actually had a significant fiscal policy for the last 10 years where we are determined to lower the property tax. No Conservative MPP is coming into my city to say we have bloated, fat bureaucracies where they can just find savings so easily. It simply is not the case. In the municipality I come from, and even in LaSalle, where we went through massive restructuring, and have for the past three years, on one day the minister would stand up and say how wonderful we were as an example in the reconfiguration of health care, and then the next day he tells everyone how terrible everyone is because the system is all fat and bloated. You can't have it both ways. So one of us is lying. I will assure you, the people from my riding are telling the truth.

The mayor from the town of North Bay says the net impact of additional costs and lost revenue would translate into more than $20 million annually, a 75% increase. So we're going to have two options in the city of North Bay. Premier Mike Harris, will either be increasing the property tax where he comes from by some percentage, or they're going to lose services in North Bay. Those are the two options for the people of the constituency of Mike Harris.

This poor fellow the mayor of North Bay actually had the gall to publicly denounce the policies of Mike Harris. He got some terrible phone calls from Bill King, the assistant to the Premier: "Don't say anything publicly, for heaven's sake." He couldn't possibly be telling the truth. So they got into quite an argument, King adamantly denying the figures. The truth is the government cannot go to the people and purport to be bringing in tax-revenue-neutral exchanges, and the same government won't even give the people the real figures.

We have people in London; it seems to me we have MPPs of the Conservative Party in the London area. Surely, over the last six weeks when they were at home in their ridings they met with their local officials, and these people said, "You're all wet."

We have two options in the city of London, which, you'll remember, went through significant amalgamation in the last term of the provincial government. You'll remember that well. They already went through various levels of downsizing and changing to be more efficient. These are the people you're saying are now too fat and bloated as bureaucracies, that they're going to go find more savings, because this is a revenue-neutral exchange. If it's revenue-neutral, why do they need to find more savings? In fact, today in the House the government has already acknowledged: "There we go. We're $567 million short." That goes a long way towards paying the amount in the income tax cut you're supposedly giving to people.

What was very interesting in the reaction from the mayor of Mississauga — again, we have Conservative MPPs from the Mississauga area — Ontario residents would be asked about municipalities picking up the tab for social services. "Would you really dare to bring in your referenda legislation so we can use that to ask real questions, instead of the fake and phoney excuses these government Conservative MPPs have used for the discussion of referenda?" It goes on. Clearly you can't find any support for the programs you want to bring in, and here you are just shoving it down the throats of Ontario residents through the taxes they pay on their property. I don't think it's appropriate and no one out there believes it's appropriate either.

A number of comments were made today. You started off by saying, "Finally, we're going to lift half, that accounts for education, off the property tax." May I say that the people in my riding and other ridings across Ontario are not going to see the difference, because not only are they replacing that with these downloaded, dumped programs, but they're going to be replaced with even more costs because it's not a revenue-neutral exchange.

Let's talk about the real reason they want to get their hands on that education money. The real agenda of a right-wing reform government is to privatize absolutely everything they can.

**1700**

Now, we know that there are reformers in the government caucus who have been pushing this charter school idea, pushing the idea of this fat, bloated education system that doesn't work, and for every documented item that this Minister of Education has brought in the House, we'll provide five to ten wonderful stories of Ontario children who do exceptionally well in our education system. It's

just more of this propaganda. First you destroy the system so that whatever you create will be perceived as something, and that's exactly what this government is intending in the area of education.

We had a terrible headline in a Saturday paper in Ontario this past weekend, and it said, "University of the Élite." I hope you all recognize that. It was a terrible thing, and it caused me to think back to the days when I was in school and wonder if I could ever have afforded university today. If I had to go back and do it today, could I ever have afforded it? I'm guessing I just might not have been able to do it.

We're not going to know at this point, but we will know shortly, because they're all signing the cheques right now: a 30% increase. Now the YPC movement, alive and well at the University of Windsor, are in for quite a shock this fall, quite a shock indeed, that their own government that was supposed to be pro-student, pro-education, just slapped a 30% increase in tuition on those students. A big surprise for the students, and of course the people who live in Windsor-Riverside have been telling our candidate, Gary McNamara, about that for the last several weeks.

Every time we knock on a door where they have university students in that home, it is the first item that comes to mind. "Why is Mike Harris doing this to our young people? I thought he was supposed to be giving them a hand up, providing opportunities." All that rhetoric that you passed off during your election campaign is coming home to roost. Those people are now seeing the effects of your commonsense, illogical revolution and what it means is more fees, only hidden, not perceived to be costs borne by the provincial government.

I can tell you that it goes on. We have umpteen examples of that. There are lots of ways to tax the people. Mike Harris stood up and said, no new user fees for the disabled, no new user fees in health care, no new user fees for seniors. Well, we know that all went out by way of the dodo bird with this gang, because the people again, as we're canvassing and knocking on doors, the first thing they tell Gary McNamara is, "I'm paying $100 a year now for my prescriptions." Well, isn't that news? Not only that, you tried to scam them for three months and make them pay double. But thanks to the work that we did you reversed the three months. None the less, they're still saddled with an additional $100 a year, and we are talking about people who are on a fixed income.

These are the same individuals who are, in many cases, in social housing programs. These are the people — you can't just look at 152 in isolation; look at everything that you're doing to the housing system in Ontario. We're at the moment going clause-by-clause through Bill 96 on rent control. We know it's only a matter of time before buildings will completely eliminate the rent control within these buildings. These are the same people you've slapped with user fees for drug costs, slapped with other user fees of every description, and now you're removing rent controls for the very people who are on a fixed income. If you're in a community where there's lots and lots of housing, you could almost say: "You know, there's a choice here. People can move." You cannot say that in the city of Windsor. You cannot say that in Metropolitan Toronto.

Those are the issues. You've all read the same journals as I have about the slum landlords out there who are not fixing their buildings, and at the same time you decide that you're going to go after this gang, and it's the same gang that has the least opportunity to get to their local MPP and make him or her understand what's happening to them. Frankly, it's your responsibility to take care of all Ontarians, not just the ones who write you a cheque at your fund-raiser.

**Mrs Marland:** You mean like Patti Starr?

**Mrs Pupatello:** I understand Patti Starr did quite a bit of fund-raising for the PC Party.

Let's look at some examples of ministries that have actually implemented significant user fees right across the board in Ontario — lots of ways to tax people. Here's a very hidden way that you've managed to tax people.

I remember Mike Harris didn't have the nerve to come into the city of Windsor. He stood on the curb of the airport. The propeller of the plane was still going when he got to the curb of the airport during the last election to say hi, and then off he went again. But what he did say when he was there for 30 seconds was, "No new user fees." Well, look what we have here; lists and lists of user fees, not just across the board —

**Mr Gilchrist:** Table that.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Well, he wants to name them. We've got MNR fee increases. Here are the fee increases. This is MNR, just one ministry, a whole slew of new user fees. From the minister we've got Bill 26 ability to allow us to increase the application fee by $5 here, $10 here. The Ministry of Health, for heaven's sake: They've got four pages of new user fees for the Ministry of Health. Who do you think you're fooling? Do you not believe that these people understand that? Have you been to a door in your riding yet of an individual who has been in a hospital? You really have to get out there, folks, and talk to the people back home, because they know what's happening in the health system.

Come down to Windsor. I've asked you. Jack, you came. You decided to sit in on our child task force hearings. This, from the PA, whose minister said that it was a useless exercise we were going through to determine exactly what you've done to children in Ontario. Well, you certainly didn't think so when you wasted your day coming to Windsor for it, and what you heard is the reality, that the cuts you've made to social programs have hurt people. In fact they've hurt predominantly children, haven't they? Well, you were there. You and I both heard the same argument. We're going to talk more on that later, I know.

The good news is that I would encourage many of the Conservative MPPs to come and hear at first hand, because I don't see that you're very prepared to go out and find that information yourself.

Let's talk about seniors. Again, canvassing for Gary McNamara in Windsor-Riverside, they have a significant seniors' population there and they have some significant

fees there that they are now facing that are new. Look at this: long-term-care facility program resident copayment fee. See, that's the key word. This government's decided: "Don't say 'user fee' because that's what Mike Harris used during the election. If we call it a 'copayment fee' people won't recognize it as being the same thing." You obviously think people are foolish. In any event, you've increased the fee, maximum basic. You've increased it every year since you've been in government.

If we move on: Chronic care copayment in hospitals. Now I know you've gotten a load of this one, because surely you must have seniors in your own ridings who are in long-term-care facilities and chronic care. The copayment for people in a chronic care hospital or patients in an acute hospital awaiting placement to a chronic care or long-term-care facility was streamlined to match the basic rate paid by long-term-care residents: $41.16 per day. Now, who do you think is paying that new fee? The revenue generated remains with the facility charging the copayment, so the hospital now, faced with the massive cuts that they face under your government, they're charging people $41.16, the perfect example, and the list goes on.

You're doing the same thing in Bill 152 with ambulance service. You have not told the people across Ontario how they're going to deliver an ambulance service. What we realize now is that they're going to be responsible not just for the cost— I mean, they're going to get the bill, guaranteed. We're not just getting an invoice that they must pay.

Non-monetary responsibilities: Ensure proper management, operation and use of land ambulance service provided in its area. Ensure necessary supply of vehicles, equipment, information and services.

As you well know, in a significant number of regions all of those local counties are having a look at their emergency service, their 911 service, all of those things, and as my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt clearly pointed out earlier, you are setting up a system that is supposed to be streamlined, is supposed to be one-access, supposed to be no silos but a seamless system, and here you've taken a significant part of emergency service of health care, like ambulance, and you've dumped it on to cities and towns. The very thing this minister says he's going to do, he's actually doing the reverse in the introduction of Bill 152. It's an illogical move, and the only reason they've done it is because they've got to get it off the books. You have got to find millions and millions of dollars to get off your books because you want to be the big Taxfighter.

**1710**

When people write the cheque for their property tax, they'll know, and if the cities and towns are smart, they're going to show the pie chart. It's going to have a great big piece of the pie this time and it's going to say, "Mike Harris's piece of pie." It's going to show the amount of increase thanks to the downloading. I think that's a fabulous idea. You may as well know who's charging you for the service. If you don't pay out of this pocket, people, you're paying out of this pocket. That's exactly what this is about. I guess the worst part is that you're paying out of a different pocket for a service that should be provided through the income tax that's generated by the provincial ratepayer. It's not the same thing to take that kind of money off property tax. It doesn't make good sense.

There's a significant concern about child care. As you know, this government introduced significant changes in social services, including workfare. What it means is that there will be more and more people who need to access child care. This government has absolutely buried its head in the sand and determined, "There must be no needs out there." You are already 8,000 spaces short in Metro Toronto alone for people who are on waiting lists for subsidized child care. These are the same, predominantly women, who lack one thing: The one barrier they have to get into the workforce is child care, and you've now brought in new legislation that you expect to pass very shortly that's going to mean they absolutely have to have child care.

Again there's another agenda at work. It has nothing to do with who is paying what etc. In this case it's merely a move to privatize the system. You can't bear the fact that there ought to be provincially run, provincially funded, subsidized day care for people out there, for working Ontarians, predominantly women, who are in need of this kind of support. You're still doing everything you can through legislation to set up a voucher system so that you will take our taxpayers' money and move it into potentially an underground system, into the private day care hands, all the while bringing in changes after the fact that change regulations in providing good, quality child care in Ontario.

I would ask most people on the street, "If I was going to take your dollar, as a taxpayer in Ontario, I want that dollar spent where there is good control and very good regulation."

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Pupatello:** I see the Solicitor General has some comments to make. We'll certainly get to that area shortly.

If you asked a taxpayer they would say that if they're going to give you a dollar, you've got to spend it wisely. You have to ensure that if the dollar is for child care, it is coupled with good regulation; that those children will be safe; that we have fences around the backyard; that the children who are going to the day care centre are eating at an appropriate time, are eating appropriate things, that it's not powdered milk, that it is nutritious.

I don't think these things are exceptional as expectations, yet you are setting the stage in the downloading of child care to make towns and cities right across Ontario say, "The pothole on E.C. Row or a child care space." Those are the kinds of decisions you've offloaded from cities and you've put them on to the local municipalities.

I go into the city of Barrie. Are you aware that we have one of the highest levels of teenage pregnancies in the city of Barrie? I would think that the public health unit in the city of Barrie is going to want some say. What have you done in the area of public health, where it's predominantly working in the area of prevention? You've cut 60% of the nursing staff in public health in Barrie. Now you're taking

that same unit, giving it over to the city and saying, "Here, you pay for it."

They're already in decline. The nurses there already recognize that they are not visiting all the newborn babies they would like to. But this government wants the big headline that they're doing something in prevention for infants. Right here in Ontario today, we have nurses who work in the public health units who are not getting out there to see every baby that they feel they ought to see. Even the public health nurses have to triage and go by various methods, nothing controlled or standard, to determine who they are going to visit and who they are not. How many of these babies are falling through the cracks? Now you are bringing in Bill 152 to make it worse.

While I'm listening to these Conservative MPPs talk about this — this is supposed to be efficiency and effectiveness of government — I would take you back just one week ago, not even a week, where we had the opening of boot camp which the government is going to take a lot of credit for, this fabulous idea for young offenders. The reality is that this government, the Conservatives, these people who are supposed to be such wonderful financial managers, are spending $2.5 million to oversee the care of seven young offenders — seven. You couldn't even find young offenders to put in that program and you spent an absolute fortune. You snatched young offenders from other areas and other regions who were already in other programs so you could try to fill it up. The child advocate had to go into that facility and yank them back out because it was totally inappropriate. You weren't able to find the young offenders who were bad enough to get in your boot camp in time for your ribbon-cutting. That's about as bad as your family support plan.

This gang who wants to stand today to talk about Bill 152 because it's effective and efficient — you cannot come in this House with the kind of record you are now developing. You just love to talk about other governments and their history. You've got two and a half years now. You're not new any more. You've been here for two and a half years. This is your legacy of $2.5 million to care for seven kids so you could have a ribbon-cutting and get the big news because you're doing something about young offenders in Ontario. That's what this government is about.

The family support plan: You want to tell people that you fixed the system. It was an absolute disaster, so much so that you sent the Attorney General scurrying around to try to find evidence that the program was working. My phone rang in Windsor and your phones were ringing in your ridings because you knew it was a complete botch-up. Your own Premier had to go out there and say: "It was a terrible job. We did not do that well." And this gang wants to stand today and talk about efficiency and the efficacy of the kinds of bills you're bringing in the House? It's a shame.

In the end, we've got to talk about where people should be paying what taxes. People who truly need help need to be in a position to receive it and they don't have to get caught in a war between who is obliged to provide the service. Historically, over decades and decades of government in Ontario, they assumed the responsibility for social programs. They did it because those same programs were bankrupting municipalities in Ontario, because regionally they could not afford the cost. That is what you're heading us down. You're going to get the big headline because your books are going to balance.

All I can tell you is that I will go out of my way to write to every city and town, and when they send out their tax chits next time around and over the next couple of years, just like they were doing the last five or six years where they were separating out who paid how much tax and to whom, there's going to be a great big new piece of the pie and it's going to say, "Mike Harris's increased tax."

For OPP alone — we've got a list that's significant. This is not just in isolation; you're downloading all kinds of additional new costs to municipalities. It doesn't just stop with housing, with public health, with child care; it's going on and on and on, acknowledged by the minister when she presented that this was just the beginning. This in fact is just the beginning.

It's no wonder you want to be in the House at the end of August. You don't want to be at home in your riding to hear about it, as we've been hearing about it all along. I can tell you, it's not been a happy or content place to be, listening to your phone ring, because even your Tory friends are telling you it's all wet and it's not going to work.

In closing, I should tell you that I look forward to additional debate on this. What I would truly enjoy is a Conservative MPP being honest, standing and realizing that our property taxes are going up or we're going to lose significant, required services in the province of Ontario.

**1720**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gary L. Leadston) :** Questions and comments?

**Mr Pouliot:** I enjoyed the remarks from both the members for Windsor-Sandwich and for Scarborough-Agincourt. Tax chaos is about to hit North Bay. It's a fracas extraordinaire. This is what the mayor of North Bay has to say, and North Bay is where the Premier of the province resides, where he lives: "The net impact of additional costs and lost revenue will translate into more than $20 million annually."

This is what the mayor, Jack Burrows, says, and Burrows knows what he's talking about. Burrows doesn't work for the Premier's office. He's not a Tory hack. He has no bias. But Mayor Jack knows North Bay. He's saying that taxes might go up by as much as 75%. Four months before the transfer of services, Mayor Jack Burrows says, "Where will the $20 million come from?"

He's heard Mr Leach and Mr Harris say that this will be break-even, that it's a wash. But what both the Premier and Mr Leach are not saying is that some municipalities will be big-time losers; 60% at least of municipalities can expect impacting, devastating in some cases, increases in property tax.

The Premier's office response is, "You don't know what you're talking about. We're the only ones who know." This is a quote: "An official in the Premier's office said, 'irresponsible and misleading.'"

You say: "Show me the money. Show me the figures." I believe Jack Burrows because he lives in North Bay. He is the mayor of North Bay. I don't believe people who live in Toronto and work for the Premier's office in a political capacity. They're going to get hit big time.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm just going to take a couple of seconds to dismiss the insufferable and conceited arrogance of the member for Windsor-Sandwich, who stands in her place here today and says tuition's going up 30%. She knows full well it can't go up more than 10%. She suggests that 60% of the public health nurses were fired in Barrie, knowing full well the province doesn't hire and fire public health nurses. It is incredible the arrogance she brings to this chamber, suggesting that no one else knows what's going on in this province except the honourable member.

I'm pleased to tell her that I've been three times to the by-election right next-door to her and I've heard a very different message. I note that today the Windsor Star endorsed Fran Funaro, the Conservative candidate down in the riding of Windsor-Riverside and repudiated everything you stand for. They came right out and blamed you and your party —

**Mr Pouliot:** Don't get your hopes up.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Don't you heckle too loud, because they blamed you as well and said both of your candidates were the mismanagement for the last 10 years.

But let's go further. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt made a big point earlier in his presentation and suggested it was some great revelation, the $667-million elimination of the grants between the province and the municipality. Let me just read you a quote. It may have been a shock to the members opposite, but it sure wasn't to the president of AMO. In fact, Terry Mundell, AMO president, said about the AMO deal:

"The reality of the situation is that the province told us about a year ago that the $667 million in municipal support grant money was being eliminated. That's the difference in the tradeoff' — the Globe and Mail, May 2, 1997. So that means they knew a year and a half ago. Everyone else in this province, everyone who bothered to read the budget, everybody who deals with the facts and not your fearmongering and your ill-founded rhetoric, knows that's our expectation.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Smart-ass. I'll show you where your rhetoric —

**Mr Gilchrist:** Everybody that contributed to the $100-billion debt has to be part of the saving, and they're going to save $667 million.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Windsor-Sandwich to withdraw the comment you made.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I withdraw.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** The member for Scarborough East is working awfully hard to find anybody out there who can actually provide some support, supposedly objective support, of his party's policies. When he reaches so far as to cite editorials where the policy is undoubtedly influenced by the beliefs of the new owner of —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Continue.

**Mrs McLeod:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just find it passing strange that he should have to reach to the Conrad Black editorial policy to find support for this party's policies, but maybe I shouldn't find that strange.

I would prefer that we try and use some of the government's own information to shed some light on to this debate. I think that's what my colleagues the member for Windsor-Sandwich and the member for Scarborough-Agincourt have tried to do today.

I've been looking through the material that Mr Leach, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, sent out to us earlier. I wonder whether the Tory members got the same package I did. I wonder if they've looked at the numbers that Mr Leach has been providing as to the net impact on their municipalities. I know that the member for Scarborough East has acknowledged today, perhaps inadvertently, that this is not revenue-neutral, in spite of the fact that his minister keeps trying to say it is. But I wonder if they realize just how significant the offload to municipalities is going to be.

I know these are just estimates. They acknowledge that, because the government has no idea what the real impact on municipalities is going to be. They're going to forge ahead and do this no matter what the impact. But I look at Halton region, for example, with a $33-million net loss, net impact in costs. I look at Hastings, with a $15-million impact in costs. I look at Kent county, $12.6 million. I listened to Mr Carroll participate in the debate and then I look at Chatham district, which I've lost at the moment, which has several million dollars in costs. Haldimand-Norfolk has $9.2 million. Even in the Premier's own riding of Nipissing — I wonder if the Premier has seen this — there's $17.7 million net impact in costs.

But they say: "Don't worry. The municipalities can find 2% to offset those new costs." I don't know why the municipalities should have to make savings that go directly into the provincial treasury to pay for the province's tax cut.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I listened very attentively to the addresses from the member for Scarborough-Agincourt and the member for Windsor-Sandwich. They addressed a lot of the concerns that the people of my riding are talking about. Mike Harris used to be considered the Taxfighter, but now everybody calls him the Taxhiker because he's increasing taxes on everybody in the province of Ontario, one after the other. It doesn't matter if you're senior or if you're younger people in society. With this Bill 152, as has been explained in the comments, when you transfer ambulance service to municipalities, when you transfer social housing to municipalities, the property taxes are going to go up.

This doesn't necessarily only mean if you own a home. If you rent, your rent is going to go up because Mike

Harris wants to balance the books on the backs of the ordinary working people out there who rent or own a home. He's doing it to everything, through the municipalities, through the changes he's making to health care, changes he's making to the education system, the students, tuition fees are going up.

It's one thing to campaign during a campaign and say, "There will be no new user fees," and "Taxes are too high; we're going to give a 30% tax break," but you're going to go out and collect billions of dollars and force the mayors and the councillors and the reeves to raise the property taxes to allow Mike Harris to give a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in the province.

That's what it's all about. There only is one taxpayer out there, and that taxpayer is being attacked severely by Mike Harris and his Conservative government through every service you were getting before. The mayors and reeves in northern Ontario are saying they're going to have to do massive layoffs of employees at the municipal level or raise taxes. Even police services: $500 a house for OPP servicing? It's ridiculous.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Sandwich has two minutes.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I find it quite interesting that every time we start bringing incidents and issues and examples that can only be the truth because we can only use figures that the ministries themselves provide — all these items I've brought to your attention today are on Ministry of Health letterhead, Ministry of Labour letterhead. These are your figures, these are your numbers. I will not be caught using other numbers. I will only use the government's numbers. We have done that from the very beginning. We only have your numbers to use. These are your figures.

In one year alone, from 1995 through 1996, this Mike Harris government brought in 1,008 user fees. You can call them taxes or you can call them user fees. You brought in 1,008 in one year alone. We're counting now your second year and we'll give that figure to you as well. We're getting the information from your ministries, as well as lots of other information, as difficult as you try to make it. Your own Minister of Housing refuses to give cities and towns the very numbers they need like, "How much does it cost to run the housing project that you're dumping on the city?" The mayor of Belleville, a self-proclaimed Conservative, said: "I have never set foot in the provincial housing projects in the city of Belleville. Why would I ever?" He has no idea what it costs other than that he is now assuming that cost. It's as simple as that.

I'll take all the personal attacks, because when a government party is reduced to simply attacking the speaker so personally, they clearly don't have any other arguments to make and all we can do is to present people with the facts. I look forward to the pie chart when the property taxes start going up and I hope they call it the Mike Harris piece of pie.

**1730**

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Mr Speaker, before I begin, I would ask for unanimous consent to defer our party's leadoff until tomorrow evening, when our critic will be here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed?

**Mrs Marland:** What are you going to do?

**Ms Martel:** I'm going to speak for 20 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you repeat the request?

**Ms Martel:** The request was to defer our party's leadoff until tomorrow, when the critic will be here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Do we have consent?

A point of order?

**Mrs Marland:** No, it is not a point of order; it's further to the request. Their leadoff speaker, who is the critic, is not here and would be able to speak tomorrow night. The leadoff speaker has an hour and the next speaker has 20 minutes now. That means the third party will be going into 20-minute rotations.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's right.

**Ms Martel:** I'm going to speak for 20 minutes and our leadoff of an hour would go tomorrow. I would speak for 20 minutes now.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there agreement? Agreed.

**Ms Martel:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Despite what the Conservative member has said this afternoon about this being a disentanglement process or a negotiation process, it is nothing at all like that.

You had municipal leaders who in January had a gun held to their heads and were told, "These are the services, these are the programs and these are the associated costs which you're going to have the pleasure of offloading on to the backs of your local property taxpayers."

That is what the scenario is all about and that is what we have been dealing with from the beginning with the appointment of the Who Does What panel, a panel of handpicked Tory appointees who had very little public consultation, very little public input from people about their concerns about the cost of the download and the services that were going to be exchanged through the announcements in January, May and again in August, when the numbers still continued to roll out about just how local property taxpayers were going to take it in the necks for the dumping this government is doing.

What we have today in Bill 152 is the legislative framework to allow that dumping, that downloading, that offloading of those services and those costs on to the backs of municipal taxpayers. There is only one taxpayer, and that taxpayer is going to get it in the neck through Bill 152. As we have all seen, as everyone in this House has seen through the three different stages where costs have been outlined, this is not a wash, this is not cost-neutral, this is not revenue-neutral; this represents a huge dumping of costs on to the backs of property taxpayers.

The reason it is happening is because this government is so interested in trying to find some savings to finance its big tax cut for the rich and famous that they are quite prepared to download, to dump, to offload all kinds of costs the province used to pick up on to the backs of local taxpayers and hope that municipal politicians are going to

carry the blame for that rather than the folks at Queen's Park. That is what is behind all this: how the provincial government can cut some of its costs to put some money away for the tax cut and do that at the expense of local property taxpayers, who will suffer a cut in services or an increase in taxes and new user fees, or a combination of both.

I don't think that most municipal leaders who were at AMO last week felt a great deal of comfort from the Premier's saying that he promised on his pinkie that the needs of municipalities were going to be met. I don't think very many municipal politicians in the room felt very good about that. All they have seen to date is a Conservative government that has desperately tried to play a shell game with voters and taxpayers. This is a government that has tried to claim the package is revenue-neutral when in fact about a $1.2-billion cost is going to be dumped on to municipal taxpayers, and that comes through a combination of two things: about $550 million, which is associated with the government's own numbers, in services and associated costs which are going to be dumped, and then you have to add in the loss of unconditional grants of some $666 million. For many communities, particularly in the part of the world I come from, municipal support grants in the form of northern support grants make up a significant percentage of the revenues that come into municipalities and then go out in the form of delivering services.

While the government has tried to say, "Oh, the municipalities knew about this a year and a half ago," it is clear from the government's own statements that the government itself refuses to acknowledge in its download numbers that this is a cost to the municipalities. Consistently Minister Leach, in all his public announcements about the costs, has refused to admit that the cut in the unconditional grant, its loss, represents a download to municipalities because it means they have to find the ways and means, which are going to mean increased taxes, to make up for the difference, especially in northern communities.

It is also a joke that in light of this government's conveniently trying to neglect to admit time and time again that that makes up a cost, they also have had the audacity to suggest that by the year 2000 municipalities will be in a position to decrease their taxes by 3%. I don't know which world you live in, folks, but the municipal leaders where I come from are telling you, "You don't know what you're talking about." That comes from the mayor of the city of Sudbury, a former MPP, a former Conservative cabinet minister, who has told you people that you don't know what you're talking about, that you're living in la-la land. We in the city of Sudbury, for example, are going to experience a hit of $46 million, in the region we're taking a hit of $73 million, and there is no way in heaven that we are going to be looking at a tax cut of 3% by the year 2000. We are going to be looking at a tax hike, a significant one, in 1998, 1999, 2000 and beyond to deal with your download costs.

In northern Ontario there isn't a municipality that will be in a position to deal with a 3% cut in local taxes in the year 2000. It's not on primarily because the loss in unconditional grants from this government just won't allow it to happen because those grants make up such a significant portion of municipal budgets in northern Ontario.

Let me give you some idea of the download costs to northern Ontario. This comes as a result of the government figures which were released in August. In the Algoma district we're looking at an increase of $982 per household; Cochrane district, an increase of $1,104 per household; Kenora, an increase of $1,185 per household; Nipissing district, the Premier's home riding, a $949 increase per household; Rainy River district, $1,140 increase; Sudbury region, $913 increase per household; Thunder Bay district, $748 increase per household.

That's how the figures translate. These are the figures that came from the government. I should point out that this doesn't include the download of provincial highways and doesn't deal yet with the download of social housing costs because the government hasn't been good enough to give that to us yet — never mind the OPP costs. In the east part of my riding alone we're looking at a $517 increase per household strictly for OPP.

**1740**

Think about it, folks. How do you expect these municipalities to cope? The overall download in northern Ontario is $282.9 million. We get no comfort whatsoever from the vague promise which has been made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Northern Development that there will be a $500-million fund and a $70-million fund to address special needs. The total download is $1.2 billion. Those special funds combined won't even meet that problem.

We get no comfort from the vague promises about these funds, because to date no one from the government has released any information with respect to the criteria that will be established to access the fund, which communities will be entitled to apply, how long they will be in place, how they will work. None of us is feeling very good about having the minister stand up and tell us special needs will be met, when we have no idea what the criteria will be and when we already know that the total cost of the download by this Conservative government far, far exceeds the amount of money they claim they are going to put back into the system to respond to those special needs.

In Sudbury alone the download cost — and these were done as of August, when the new numbers came out that were released by the province — to the city of Sudbury alone is $46.9 million. The download cost in the regional municipality alone, which takes in a number of other outlying communities, is $73.6 million. There will be Conservative members who would like to stand in their place and tell the municipal politicians where I come from that they don't know what they're talking about, kind of like Bill King, who called Mayor Jack Burrows and told him he didn't know what he was talking about.

I tell you that I have more faith in the numbers put out by the people in my community, who live and work in my community and have been municipal politicians there for a long time, along with the staff, who have been in place for

a long time, than I do in any kind of assertion from the Conservative backbench that people don't know what they are talking about. Sorry. They work and live in my community.

They know about the revenues, about the expenditures, about what it costs to operate the physical plant and other social services. I'll trust their numbers any day of the week over what I hear from the backbench here, who are trying to say that there is going to be some kind of cut in municipal taxes in the year 2000. These people know what they're talking about; they know what the numbers represent. In our community a $73-million dump by this Conservative government means a huge cut in services that people have had to date, means a huge increase in the taxes we are going to pay, means a whole host of new user fees to compensate for the loss.

I mentioned earlier that the major problem that northern communities will have, that this government wants to fail to recognize, is the impact of the loss of the unconditional grants, of the municipal support grants. In the regional municipality alone 50% of the regional budget is made up by the unconditional grant — 50%. That is a huge portion. While the government continues to claim that people knew about this, they fail to recognize the impact and fail to incorporate the impact into the download numbers. You have to incorporate that into the download numbers because it does represent a significant loss of revenue. Municipal politicians will be left with no choice but to raise property taxes and cut services to make up for the difference in that grant, and this government has got to start recognizing that reality.

Jim Gordon, mayor of Sudbury, former MPP, former Conservative cabinet minister, said this about the province's proposed $500-million transition fund: "It's a drop in the bucket, where municipalities would have to travel cap in hand basically begging for funding." That is exactly our concern, that at the end of the day, despite the rhetoric of the government that there will be money in place, the funds allocated will nowhere near add up to the overall cost of the download, and it will be impossible for any number of communities to quality because the amount of money necessary to meet their needs just won't be in place.

The town of Nickel Centre, which is in my riding, August 15, after looking at the provincial numbers had this to say: "With the projected cut to the town budget of approximately $4.5 million, town council is worried. What it means is that the possibility of a tax increase in Nickel Centre could be up to, on average, $1,000 per household. That's what it's going to cost our people per household," said John Fera, who is a councillor, "and that's insane." He predicted that 1998 was going to be a devastating year, with either tax increases or cuts in services to local residents.

The mayor, at the same time, addressed the Conservative rhetoric that by the year 2000 somehow municipalities are going to be able to cut property taxes by 3%. "'We already have the lowest mill rates in the region,' Hayduk said. 'How are we going to reduce our expenditures any further?'"

He's right. The Conservative members just don't seem to understand that when the municipal politicians from my part of the world say, "This is a huge cost for us," they mean it and they know what they are talking about. They are telling you clearly that they will not be in a position to cut taxes by the year 2000; they will be in a position in 1998 of having to dramatically increase property taxes and cut services and introduce new user fees all at the same time, just to cope with your offload. It's not revenue-neutral, and people from communities in the part of the world I come from are telling you that again and again.

The northern mayors have been so concerned about the download and about what it means to lose the municipal support grants that they requested a meeting with the Premier, which he did not participate in and instead passed on that responsibility to the Minister of Northern Development, but they also sent out a press release at the end of June when they first made the request for the Premier to meet, to explain to him very directly the importance of the municipal support grant and why it was false and ridiculous for the government not to acknowledge the impact of this on the download numbers.

People should know that the northern support grant was actually established by a former Progressive Conservative government in 1970 to recognize the special needs of northern Ontario. The purpose of the grant was to replace some of the mining grants and the forestry stumpage fees that were collected and sent to northern Ontario in recognition of how much revenue went out of northern Ontario into southern Ontario coffers. The government of the day made a commitment that the revenues that came back to the north would never be less than the former mining revenue payments and the unconditional grants; they would always be equal so that we would never suffer a loss.

Northern municipalities were to be compensated because they had smaller bases from which to tax, because the income levels were lower than they were in a number of cases in southern Ontario and because in northern Ontario we have higher costs for services at all levels, because of our geography, because of our winter conditions. The grant compensated all those things and it also was established by a former Conservative government to compensate those municipalities that were not able to tax mining companies and underground facilities even though those same mining companies added a significant burden to the infrastructure in each of those communities. It was a way to recognize that reality and compensate accordingly.

The northern mayors have said to this Premier and the Minister of Northern Development that, in 1997, $105 million of the $155 million pay to northern municipalities was attributed directly to the northern support grant. With the elimination of the northern support grant, northern municipalities will be hard-pressed to make up for this shortfall when making their 1998 budgets.

**1750**

Let me give you an idea of what the per household cost will be because in northern Ontario the per household cost of the loss of the this grant is very significant, much more than it is in southern Ontario. In 1997, the grant entitlement in southern Ontario was about $48.4 million. In northern Ontario it was $102.8 million. When it is cut, the average loss per household in southern Ontario is $105; in the north it's $480. That's the loss of the grant alone per household and that doesn't even begin to address the costs associated with the services, many of them social services, which this government is adamant it's going to dump on municipalities.

That's why last week the northern mayors provided this document to the Minister of Northern Development and encouraged him to recognize the differences in terms of need with respect to the grant between north and south and encouraged him to understand that, like a former Tory government, this government had to recognize the special needs of northern Ontarians by putting in place a fund that was going to deal with this download.

After the meeting, a number of the northern mayors — there were five of them in attendance — were asked how they felt by the media, whether or not they had not been able to make their case, whether or not they thought the Minister of Northern Development and Monsieur Leach, who I gather joined the meeting a little bit late, understood. The mayors made the comment that the ministers did commit to the principle of fairness and equity — and I've heard this government talk about fairness and equity before so I don't find any comfort with that commitment — but they would not recognize that some of the special funds that they are talking about would be committed to northern Ontario. So the mayors went away very sceptical that the government understands and that the special needs of northern Ontario will be met.

As I conclude, let me say that Bill 152, which we are dealing with today, represents the legislative framework to allow the dumping of services and the dumping of the costs associated with those services on to municipalities. This is what this bill is all about. This whole process has had nothing to do with negotiation, has had nothing to do with disentanglement. It has had everything to do with this provincial government trying to offload as many costs as it possibly can on to the backs of municipal taxpayers so it can find some savings for the big tax cut it wants to give to its rich and famous friends.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Galt:** It's interesting to hear the member for Sudbury East talking about the mayor of Sudbury, Jim Johnson, and the drop in the bucket. He would have to go out cup in hand, begging and looking for money. I'd like to bring to your attention that I think that's traditionally been the problem. One of the biggest roles of municipal politicians has been to lobby the provincial and federal governments for funds rather than managing their own resources. They've been supplying services and going out trying to lobby for all kinds of money. Then, once they get it, they do not necessarily spend it in the wisest way, but if they were managing their resources, which is what we're encouraging them to do, then I think the municipalities would be much, much better off.

I was interested in hearing the member's comment that there's only one taxpayer. She's absolutely correct. I'd like to bring to her attention the fact that for the first time in living memory of most of us, and particularly for the Fraser Institute, tax freedom day actually backed up. In the past, it was moving ahead by leaps and bounds. As a matter of fact, in a 10-year period, from 1985 to 1995, tax freedom day moved from May 25 to June 26, a full month, 31 days, a 12th of a year, that people now have to pay taxes, work for that solid month and give to governments at various levels. It's extremely unfair as far as I'm concerned. Here in Ontario we're now saving from last year to this year for an average working family of two $1,600 — $1,600 less that they'll have to give to government out of their hard-earned money. Right now, the average family of two, with two working, is spending $29,000 in taxes. That's half of their income. I find that's just a crying shame that a family making that kind of money has to give half of it —

**The Speaker:** Further questions and comments?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I'm just absolutely amazed by the comments that just preceded me. Mayor Jim Gordon can't manage the money of the people of Sudbury? I think that will be interesting news in Sudbury very shortly.

**Mr Bradley:** A former Conservative MPP?

**Mr Michael Brown:** Yes, a former cabinet minister in a Conservative government who can't manage money. Very interesting.

I'm going to speak more to this debate when it comes around to our rotation, but I think it's important for people to understand that one third of the local tax bill that's going to show up is being levelled by the Harris government. They're going to determine the rate, they're going to determine how much is allocated to education. One third is going to be decided here.

I look around for disentanglement. Where is there disentanglement? All there is is Ernie Eves's and Mike Harris's big hands being shoved down into the wallet of the property taxpayer. That's what's going on here. There's a huge shift as the provincial government tries to find new and innovative ways to get their hands in the pockets of the property taxpayer. There's a huge shift. It's the general philosophy of Conservative governments all across the world: find ways to shift to the property tax.

I'm surprised we haven't seen a poll tax suggested here. I'm really surprised that we haven't seen a poll tax, another way to reach down, blame somebody else and at the same time inhibit services.

This government, which promised a 10% reduction in property tax just a few short months ago, is going to devastate services across this province.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** To the comments of the member for Sudbury East, I think she hit it bang on the head. She made three points in her speech.

One of them is this fallacy that the government is trying to make, that this whole downloading is going to be a revenue-neutral exercise. She demonstrated quite well that in community after community in northern Ontario — and it's the same for the south — it means there's going to be a net loss when it comes to the amount of money being downloaded on to municipalities and what they're left with. She pointed out that in communities across the north we're going to see tax increases through individual tax bills of residential property owners of anywhere from $900 to $1,400 per year, not even talking about the rest of the download that's coming, such as the transfer of police services by the OPP, which will be charging a levy of about 500 bucks.

The other point she made which I thought was a very good one is the whole notion — and I think the Tories would understand this — that the municipal mayors and the municipal aldermen are probably best situated to decide how to spend a lot of those dollars when it comes to local services. She went to the great pain of stating the obvious, that those local councils are in a better position to make those decisions. What's the comment that we get from across the way? The member for Northumberland gets up and turns around and says, quote, unquote, he's not confident that the mayors will spend the money in the wisest way, so therefore the government's got to tell them how to do things. What utter crap.

The other point is that he's mixed up in who are the mayors of the various communities. He stands up and he turns around and he calls Mayor Jim Gordon Jim Johnson. I would think at the very least, he would know —

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: He just said "crap." I believe that's unparliamentary.

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Tell me what he said.

**Mr Spina:** "Utter crap."

**The Speaker:** Can you put it in context for me?

**Mr Spina:** He's saying that the comments made by our members were "utter crap," insinuating it was a lie.

**The Speaker:** The language is offensive. I would ask you to withdraw, please.

**Mr Bisson:** I withdraw the word "crap," and replace it with "crock." How's that?

**The Speaker:** That's not good enough. Just withdraw or don't withdraw. I don't care, one or the other.

**Mr Bisson:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mr Spina:** The member for Sudbury East made it sound as if this government is totally and absolutely ignoring the needs of the north. She waves this little book around called Fairness and Equality for the North, which was created by FONOM and which is an excellent booklet. It was an excellent presentation created by the members of the northern municipalities. What she totally ignores is the fact that no government in the last 10 years has sent more ministers, more parliamentary assistants and had more consultation with the members of the north than there ever has been.

In the beginning of AMO, myself and the minister, on the Monday, met with no less than 20 delegations, a private meeting between Minister Leach, Minister Hodgson, myself from Northern Development, Mr Grimmett, the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay, representing the Ministry of Finance, in a private meeting with the executive of NOMA and FONOM. They were very pleased at the end of that meeting with the assurances received by Minister Leach and by Minister Hodgson.

We have created something called Team North which the member totally ignores. Jim Rule, the CAO from the city of Sudbury, is at the table to represent legitimately the concerns of Sudbury in that area. Joe Mavrinac, the mayor of Timmins, is present. David Court, the director of social services from Algoma —

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: The member talks about knowing everything about the north and says Mavrinac is the mayor of Timmins. I can guarantee you that the mayor right now is Mayor Power. The mayor of Kirkland Lake is —

**The Speaker:** Okay, well taken. Responses.

**Ms Martel:** Let me begin with the member for Brampton North.

**Mr Spina:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: He stood up on a point of order and blew out the last 20 seconds of my time.

**The Speaker:** He stood up on a point of order and blew out the last 20 seconds of his. Member for Sudbury East.

**Ms Martel:** With respect to the member for Brampton North, a couple of things. He says we've had more northern ministers in northern Ontario under this government. There were six ministers from northern Ontario under our government and in our government the Minister of Northern Development and Mines actually lived in northern Ontario, which is more than I can say for this government.

With respect to what the mayors had to say after the meeting they had with the Minister of Northern Development, this is what Steve Butland said: "Butland and the other mayors worry that none of the money is specifically earmarked for the north. The Sault's mayor said, 'Ministers Leach and Hodgson wouldn't give that firm guarantee Monday' but hopes meetings like this will help drive the point home." They weren't very happy at all. They got no specific commitment to anything at this meeting.

Let me go back to the document that has been put forward by the mayors. I'll give you one specific quote. Here it is:

"A Mike Harris government will work closely with northern municipalities to forge a new and better working relationship. As part of that new relationship, we will end the downloading of services to the municipal level. No new mandates will be enacted unless appropriate funding is allocated."

This comes from the Conservative Party's Voice for the North, promises that they made in northern Ontario in the

last election, which only bought them the two same seats they already had and no new ones.

Northern municipalities, northern reeves and mayors are saying, "Live up to your commitment." We've got a download problem of $292 million in northern Ontario before provincial highways and before housing is even added in. What are you going to do in northern Ontario to make sure municipal taxpayers aren't picking up that whole cost? We haven't heard anything.

**The Speaker:** It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:30 of the clock today.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*

*Evening sitting reported in volume B.*

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arnott, Ted | Wellington | PC | parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Baird, John R. | Nepean | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion |
| Barrett, Toby | Norfolk | PC | |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Sudbury | L | |
| Bassett, Isabel | St Andrew-St Patrick | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement |
| Beaubien, Marcel | Lambton | PC | |
| Bisson, Gilles | Cochrane South / -Sud | ND | deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Boushy, Dave | Sarnia | PC | |
| Boyd, Marion | London Centre / -Centre | ND | |
| Bradley, James J. | St Catharines | L | deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition |
| Brown, Jim | Scarborough West / -Ouest | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels |
| Brown, Michael A. | Algoma-Manitoulin | L | deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition |
| Carr, Gary | Oakville South / -Sud | PC | |
| Carroll, Jack | Chatham-Kent | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Castrilli, Annamarie | Downsview | L | |
| Christopherson, David | Hamilton Centre / -Centre | ND | |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Halton North / -Nord | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles |
| Churley, Marilyn | Riverdale | ND | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Cleary, John C. | Cornwall | L | |
| Clement, Tony | Brampton South / -Sud | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjoint parlementaire du premier ministre |
| Colle, Mike | Oakwood | L | |
| Conway, Sean G. | Renfrew North / -Nord | L | |
| Cordiano, Joseph | Lawrence | L | |
| Crozier, Bruce | Essex South / -Sud | L | |
| Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne | London North / -Nord | PC | Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| Curling, Alvin | Scarborough North / -Nord | L | deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition |
| Danford, Harry | Hastings-Peterborough | PC | parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales |
| DeFaria, Carl | Mississauga East / -Est | PC | |

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Doyle, Ed | Wentworth East / -Est | PC | deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement |
| Duncan, Dwight | Windsor-Walkerville | L | |
| Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet | Durham West / -Ouest | PC | Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Elliott, Brenda | Guelph | PC | |
| Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. | Parry Sound | PC | Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances |
| Fisher, Barbara | Bruce | PC | parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales |
| Flaherty, Jim | Durham Centre / -Centre | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général |
| Ford, Douglas B. | Etobicoke-Humber | PC | assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement |
| Fox, Gary | Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud | PC | |
| Froese, Tom | St Catharines-Brock | PC | parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Galt, Doug | Northumberland | PC | parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) du ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Gerretsen, John | Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles | L | chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition |
| Gilchrist, Steve | Scarborough East / -Est | PC | parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Grandmaître, Bernard | Ottawa East / -Est | L | |
| Gravelle, Michael | Port Arthur | L | |
| Grimmett, Bill | Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances |
| Guzzo, Garry J. | Ottawa-Rideau | PC | |
| Hampton, Howard | Rainy River | ND | Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Oxford | PC | parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles | Willowdale | PC | Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. | Nipissing | PC | Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif |
| Hastings, John | Etobicoke-Rexdale | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports |
| Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris | Victoria-Haliburton | PC | Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Hoy, Pat | Essex-Kent | L | |
| Hudak, Tim | Niagara South / -Sud | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Santé |
| Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron | Burlington South / -Sud | PC | Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées) |
| Johns, Helen | Huron | PC | parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Énergie) du ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Johnson, Bert | Perth | PC | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Johnson, Hon / L'hon David | Don Mills | PC | Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Johnson, Ron | Brantford | PC | |

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jordan, W. Leo | Lanark-Renfrew | PC | parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Kells, Morley | Etobicoke-Lakeshore | PC | |
| Kennedy, Gerard | York South / -Sud | L | |
| Klees, Frank | York-Mackenzie | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Kormos, Peter | Welland-Thorold | ND | |
| Kwinter, Monte | Wilson Heights | L | |
| Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell | L | |
| Lankin, Frances | Beaches-Woodbine | ND | chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Laughren, Floyd | Nickel Belt | ND | |
| Leach, Hon / L'hon Al | St George-St David | PC | Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Leadston, Gary L. | Kitchener-Wilmot | PC | assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement |
| Marchese, Rosario | Fort York | ND | |
| Marland, Margaret | Mississauga South / -Sud | PC | |
| Martel, Shelley | Sudbury East / -Est | ND | |
| Martin, Tony | Sault Ste Marie | ND | deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Martiniuk, Gerry | Cambridge | PC | |
| Maves, Bart | Niagara Falls | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail |
| McGuinty, Dalton | Ottawa South / -Sud | L | Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition |
| McLean, Allan K. | Simcoe East / -Est | PC | |
| McLeod, Lyn | Fort William | L | |
| Miclash, Frank | Kenora | L | deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition |
| Morin, Gilles E. | Carleton East / -Est | L | Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Munro, Julia | Durham-York | PC | |
| Murdoch, Bill | Grey-Owen Sound | PC | |
| Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn | Scarborough-Ellesmere | PC | Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Newman, Dan | Scarborough Centre / -Centre | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Santé |
| North, Peter | Elgin | Ind | |
| O'Toole, John R. | Durham East / -Est | PC | |
| Ouellette, Jerry J. | Oshawa | PC | |
| Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al | York Centre / -Centre | PC | Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports |
| Parker, John L. | York East / -Est | PC | parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Patten, Richard | Ottawa Centre / -Centre | L | |
| Pettit, Trevor | Hamilton Mountain | PC | |
| Phillips, Gerry | Scarborough-Agincourt | L | |
| Pouliot, Gilles | Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon | ND | |
| Preston, Peter L. | Brant-Haldimand | PC | |
| Pupatello, Sandra | Windsor-Sandwich | L | |
| Ramsay, David | Timiskaming | L | |
| Rollins, E.J. Douglas | Quinte | PC | |
| Ross, Lillian | Hamilton West / -Ouest | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. | Leeds-Grenville | PC | Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels |

| Member / Député(e) | Constituency / Circonscription | Party / Parti | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ruprecht, Tony | Parkdale | L | |
| Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob | Mississauga West / -Ouest | PC | Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation) |
| Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William | Eglinton | PC | Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Sergio, Mario | Yorkview | L | |
| Shea, Derwyn | High Park-Swansea | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Sheehan, Frank | Lincoln | PC | |
| Silipo, Tony | Dovercourt | ND | deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Skarica, Toni | Wentworth North / -Nord | PC | |
| Smith, Bruce | Middlesex | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John | Mississauga North / -Nord | PC | Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Spina, Joseph | Brampton North / -Nord | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. | Carleton | PC | Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Stewart, R. Gary | Peterborough | PC | assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement |
| Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris | Etobicoke West / -Ouest | PC | Speaker / Président |
| Tascona, Joseph N. | Simcoe Centre / -Centre | PC | |
| Tilson, David | Dufferin-Peel | PC | |
| Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. | Markham | PC | Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Turnbull, David | York Mills | PC | chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement |
| Vankoughnet, Bill | Frontenac-Addington | PC | |
| Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble | S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est | PC | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones |
| Wettlaufer, Wayne | Kitchener | PC | |
| Wildman, Bud | Algoma | ND | New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim | Simcoe West / -Ouest | PC | Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé |
| Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth | Waterloo North / -Nord | PC | Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail |
| Wood, Bob | London South / -Sud | PC | parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général |
| Wood, Len | Cochrane North / -Nord | ND | |
| Young, Terence H. | Halton Centre / -Centre | PC | |
| Vacant | Oriole | | |
| Vacant | Ottawa West / -Ouest | | |
| Vacant | Windsor-Riverside | | |

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

# CONTENTS

## Tuesday 2 September 1997


### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11663
**Labour Day**
Mr Martin ..... 11663
**Second Marsh**
Mr Ouellette ..... 11663
**School bus safety**
Mr Hoy ..... 11664
**Speech-language pathology**
Ms Lankin ..... 11664
**Autosystems**
Mr Rollins ..... 11664
**Correctional facilities**
Mr Ramsay ..... 11664
**Vehicle registration fees**
Ms Martel ..... 11665
**Teachers' labour dispute**
Mr Klees ..... 11665

### FIRST READINGS

**Highway Traffic Amendment Act (licence suspensions), 1997,**
Bill 154, *Mr Grimmett*
Mr Grimmett ..... 11665
Agreed to ..... 11665
**Victims of Violent Crime Commemoration Week Act, 1997,**
Bill 155, *Mr Baird*
Mr Baird ..... 11665
Agreed to ..... 11666

### MOTIONS

**Standing committee on public accounts**
Mr David Johnson ..... 11666

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Education financing**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11666
Mr Snobelen ..... 11666, 11668
Mr Wildman ..... 11668
**Property taxation**
Mr Phillips ..... 11667
Mr David Johnson ..... 11667
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Martin ..... 11669
Mr Tsubouchi ..... 11669
**Class size**
Mr Bartolucci ..... 11670
Mr Snobelen ..... 11671
**Municipal restructuring**
Ms Lankin ..... 11671
Mr David Johnson ..... 11671
**Fire safety**
Mrs Marland ..... 11672
Mr Runciman ..... 11672
**Public service and labour relations reform**
Mr Patten ..... 11672
Mrs Witmer ..... 11673
**Casinos**
Mr Martin ..... 11673
Mr Saunderson ..... 11673
**Vehicle emission testing**
Mr Jim Brown ..... 11674
Mr Sterling ..... 11674
**Hazardous waste**
Mr Agostino ..... 11674
Mr Sterling ..... 11674

### PETITIONS

**Hospital restructuring**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11675
Mr Stewart ..... 11676
**Cancer prevention**
Ms Churley ..... 11675
**Court decision**
Mr Bob Wood ..... 11676
Mr Grimmett ..... 11677
Mr Clement ..... 11677
**Municipal restructuring**
Mr Cleary ..... 11676
**Standing orders reform**
Mr Wildman ..... 11676
**Video lottery terminals**
Mrs McLeod ..... 11677
**Bear hunting**
Mr Wildman ..... 11677
**TVOntario**
Mr Gravelle ..... 11677
**Fire in Hamilton**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11677
**Gasoline prices**
Mr Bradley ..... 11677
**Pay equity**
Mr Christopherson ..... 11678

### SECOND READINGS

**Services Improvement Act, 1997,**
Bill 152, *Mrs Ecker*
Mr Carroll ..... 11678, 11688
Mr Gilchrist ..... 11680, 11697
Mr Bradley ..... 11686
Mr Pouliot ..... 11687, 11696
Mrs Marland ..... 11687
Mr Phillips ..... 11687, 11688
Mrs Pupatello ..... 11690, 11697
Mrs McLeod ..... 11697
Mr Len Wood ..... 11697
Ms Martel ..... 11698, 11702
Mr Galt ..... 11701
Mr Michael Brown ..... 11701
Mr Bisson ..... 11701
Mr Spina ..... 11702
Debate deemed adjourned ..... 11703

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Diana, Princess of Wales**
Mr David Johnson ..... 11666


# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mardi 2 septembre 1997


### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 modifiant le code de la route (suspensions de permis)**
Projet de loi 154, *M. Grimmett*
Adoptée ..... 11665
**Loi de 1997 sur la Semaine de commémoration de victimes de crimes de violence**
Projet de loi 155, *M. Baird*
Adoptée ..... 11665

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur l'amélioration des services,** projet de loi 152, *M^me^ Ecker*
Débat présumé ajourné ..... 11703

CA2 ON
X1
-D23

Government
Publications

No. 222B

Nº 222B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

**Tuesday 2 September 1997**

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Mardi 2 septembre 1997**

LIBRARY
SEP 0 1997
University of Toronto

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

### Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. Our address is:

### Le Journal des débats sur Internet

Notre adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/hansard.htm

### Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### Renseignements sur l'Index

Il existe un index cumulatif des numéros précédents. Les renseignements qu'il contient sont à votre disposition par téléphone auprès des employés de l'index du Journal des débats au 416-325-7410 ou 325-3708.

### Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting Service
3330 Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Service du Journal des débats
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 September 1997

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 septembre 1997

*The House met at 1830.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA RÉFORME DE L'AIDE SOCIALE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 142, An Act to revise the law related to Social Assistance by enacting the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, by repealing the Family Benefits Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act and the General Welfare Assistance Act and by amending several other Statutes / Projet de loi 142, Loi révisant la loi relative à l'aide sociale en édictant la Loi sur le programme Ontario au travail et la Loi sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées, en abrogeant la Loi sur les prestations familiales, la Loi sur les services de réadaptation professionnelle et la Loi sur l'aide sociale générale et en modifiant plusieurs autres lois.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Would you ascertain whether or not there is a quorum in the House?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** In this debate, I believe the member for Beaches-Woodbine had just finished speaking, so we're now into questions and comments.

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I will take a couple of minutes to deal with of issues the member for Beaches-Woodbine brought up. One has to do with liens on property under the Ontario disability support program. I had made the comment earlier in the debate that our intention was that the lien issue regarding persons who are receiving benefits under the plan would not apply to a primary residence, and the member for Beaches-Woodbine has some concerns about the fact that that is not spelled out in the act, and I appreciate that it is not.

Hansard shows that her concern is that it is not set out that a lien could only be put on a primary property. I'm sure that is not her concern. That it could not be put on a primary property is really her concern. I just wanted to go on the record to correct that.

Our intention is that in the area of liens it not apply to a primary property for persons under the Ontario disability support plan, and I'm sure we can come to some agreement that that would become obvious.

A second area of concern to her is the whole area of an administrator being able to make a decision about the payment of benefits for a person under the Ontario disabilities support plan being directed to a third party. That is the way the current legislation reads, as I understand it. What we have added in the new legislation is a sense of responsibility for that person receiving those benefits on behalf of the client, and we've added in there that they cannot receive any remuneration for that.

The interest here is to protect that person who is receiving benefits and is not able to spend them wisely on behalf of themselves or on behalf of a family member. Someone is needed to make a decision on their behalf. If they have not had a guardian appointed, the administrator of the plan has the right to do that, and with protection we believe that's appropriate.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I think when members look at an act like this they should consider some of the real-world problems. I represent a northern constituency which has the city of Elliot Lake within it.

About seven years ago the mine layoffs started in Elliot Lake. It was a very dramatic time. In 1992 they accelerated even further. One of the great problems we had during the transition was the older worker, the person who is 55 to 60 and had worked his or her whole life but was no longer in a position to seek employment. The employment within the area, the opportunities, were basically nil at that point.

The provincial government and the federal government, I think all three political parties, somehow got involved during that process — the federal Conservative, initially a provincial Liberal and then a provincial NDP — so we all worked together to get some progress.

The problem I'm trying to identify here with the legislation as it is proposed is persons between 60 and 65 years of age who will have their benefits reduced to about half; you will receive about half if you go on to public support at that point. That is cruel, it is unusual and it doesn't relate to the real world. I tell you I've gone through these problems. Other members have gone through these problems. It happens all over, but I think in Elliot Lake it was probably the best example. Any government with any heart would not even consider this change.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I would like to commend the member for Beaches-Woodbine for a very fine speech.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I think it's very generous of the former Treasurer of the province to stand and commend the member for Beaches-Woodbine for her speech. I did that myself, not — how could I be speaking twice? I couldn't have had that opportunity.

**Ms Lankin:** In response to my response to Mr Carroll.

**Mrs Marland:** That's right. So I am legally speaking.

I share this member's concern for people with disabilities and I'm very proud of what our government is doing in this legislation for people with disabilities. It was very significant that the member for London Centre and the member for Beaches-Woodbine commended the government and said they agreed with the parts of this legislation in terms of improvements and changes that were being made for the people in this province who face on a daily basis challenges which the rest of us, God willing, will never know. I feel that when that happens, it is good government and it's the way this House is supposed to work.

I think it takes a person with greater ability and a bigger mind to be able to stand up and say when something is right and not always criticize. I've been in opposition for 10 years and I know the compulsion you feel to criticize the government. But there were times when I too stood in my place and complimented the government when they earned it.

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate the comments of the members for Chatham-Kent and Algoma-Manitoulin, Nickel Belt and Mississauga South.

I'd like to say to the member for Chatham-Kent that I'm glad he agreed with me and asserted, with respect to the issue of liens on property, that the government's position is set out nowhere in the legislation. I implore you to think about making that clear in the legislation. I heard some consideration that you might do that, and I think that's a very important amendment.

With respect to the issue of declaration of capacity, I understand quite fully that the current legislation has that provision. I've said to you that in your own presentation of this section of the bill — we're dealing with the disabled community section of the bill, not the general welfare section — you indicated that you wanted to move away from the patronizing system that had existed in the past. I think other legislation which has come into effect, since the original proclamation of that capacity determination, by bureaucrats within the social assistance act, not giving way to the Substitute Decisions Act and the others that give persons with disabilities the right to challenge and to assert their own right of decision-making, is really wrong-headed and very patronizing. I hope we could see some amendments there.

**1840**

The other section where I'm hoping we will see some amendments in this part of the bill is with respect to the regulations that allow other conditions of eligibility to be imposed without any sort of clear definition of what that is.

Lastly, I just want to say that I think there are improvements required to this section of the bill, but I have said on record that I am generally supportive of the thrust of the disability income support program. The problem I have is that you've combined it with something which is a complete anathema to me. These two sections of the bill should be split. Good public policy should allow us to debate both sections separately.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** I'm pleased to share with the Legislature a summary of the principal provisions and organization of the Ontario Works Act, which is a vitally important piece of social legislation, as we know, both for those on welfare and those who fund this program, the taxpayers of Ontario.

It marks the first time an Ontario government has undertaken fundamental reform of the welfare system with one clear aim in mind: to help people get back to work. I think it is especially important therefore that in considering this bill, members are clearly aware not only of the principles underlying the Ontario Works Act, which have been addressed by the minister, but also specific objectives of this legislation and how each is to be accomplished.

Through this legislation, the government will achieve four significant and fundamental welfare reform objectives.

First, it will help people on welfare to become employed and achieve self-sufficiency. It will do so through a program of mutual responsibilities. The recipient has a responsibility to participate in the program, and the delivery agents for the program, namely municipalities and the first nations, have a responsibility to offer employment assistance to help recipients prepare for and obtain employment.

The second objective achieved will be ensuring that this assistance is a last resort and goes to those most in need. There will be fairer eligibility requirements.

Third, it will improve fraud prevention and control. Taxpayers have told us they support their dollars helping those most in need, but they won't tolerate fraud and they won't tolerate abuse of the system. Our government won't either.

Fourth, the legislation ends the long-standing two-tier delivery system through which welfare programs have been provided in Ontario. It will streamline the delivery system and deliver on our government's commitment to reduce waste and duplication.

The Ontario Works Act is contained in schedule A of Bill 142. I will deal with each of the bill's five parts to illustrate how it meets the government's objective to reform the welfare system.

As an overview, part I covers eligibility for and provision of assistance. Part II is concerned with the effective date of decisions, internal reviews and the appeal process. Part III focuses on the delivery and operation of the Ontario Works program. It specifies the responsibilities of

delivery agents in the province and describes the measures to control fraud. Part IV provides for the creation of a new Social Benefits Tribunal, which will replace the current Social Assistance Review Board. Part V provides for a number of general powers and authorities.

In addition to schedule A and schedule B dealing with the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, there are three schedules to the legislation. I will talk about them later in these remarks.

Turning then to the details beginning with part I, this contains the proposed rules governing the types of assistance available, both financial and employment related. It defines eligibility: who may receive assistance and the terms and conditions. It establishes the consequences for failure to comply with the conditions of eligibility.

As the minister mentioned, this legislation will require recipients to participate in activities that benefit the community and help them to get back to work. They will take part in community improvement projects to help them acquire skills and make contacts with potential employers. They will undertake job-specific skills training. They will be required to look for a job and accept offers of employment. The philosophy governing these requirements is that social assistance is temporary support while recipients work towards becoming self-sufficient. If those requirements are not met, financial assistance may be withheld.

Critics have described this approach as tough. I think the better word is "fair." I believe it's fair to both the participant, the recipient of welfare, and to the taxpayer who is supporting it.

Participation in specific Ontario Works activities is mandatory for all able-bodied persons. This legislation will also extend opportunities to single parents who will be required to participate fully when their children are in school. They will be able to fulfil their Ontario Works requirements while their children are attending classes. The government has committed $30 million annually to help cover child care costs in these circumstances as well.

We've made this commitment because we don't think it's fair to leave single parents and others trapped on welfare without an opportunity to return to the workforce. We believe they deserve better. We also believe their children deserve better because, as the minister has said, we know that children are better off when their parent is working.

I must emphasize what the minister has already stated: Ontario Works is already giving people opportunities. We have heard positive feedback from across the province from participants, communities and administrators.

For example, the town of Goderich has benefited from over 12,000 hours of community placement efforts since the program was initiated there. These projects have contributed to improving the town's environment. They include clearing fallen trees after a storm, refurbishing park benches and picnic tables and beautifying beach areas. None of these projects could have been accomplished without the participation of Ontario Works.

In the Huron County Museum, 20,000 artefacts have been cleaned, catalogued and entered into a data system by a team of nine Ontario Works participants. They have worked with the professional museum staff and acquired some new skills in the process.

In the region of Sudbury, more than 100 Ontario Works participants have participated in a community beautification project, with activities including sprucing up barren lands outside of Sudbury by planting trees.

There are many other examples from across the province. Participants are enthusiastic about the opportunity this presents to them. Most refer to the sense of accomplishment and feeling of pride they get from contributing to their communities.

All of this speaks to our government's first goal for Ontario Works, and that's helping and encouraging people to become self-sufficient and to re-enter the workforce. It's not only the recipient who has obligations; delivery agents, acting on behalf of the province, also have obligations. They have obligations to identify and provide community participation activities and to provide employment measures, from basic education and training referrals through job-search support and employment placement.

Part I also establishes how financial assistance is to be paid and how to recover overpayments. There will be, for example, the ability to pay landlords and utility companies directly to ensure both that recipients' obligations are being met and that they are not at risk of losing basic necessities.

There will be significantly improved eligibility rules to ensure that Ontario's resources go to those who need assistance most — our second key objective.

At the same time, vision and basic dental care for children in financial need have been discretionary under the General Welfare Assistance Act. In future, those services will be mandatory for all children whose families receive support under Ontario Works.

Another important change under the Ontario Works Act will make it possible to place a lien on the residence of long-term social assistance recipients. For example, when assistance provided by the government increases the value of the home over an extended period of time through the payment of mortgage payments or emergency repairs, it makes sense to provide for a recovery under those circumstances. As the minister has explained, the purpose is to allow taxpayers to recover a portion of their investment and support, but that only happens on the disposition of the property. No one is going to be forced to sell their home to satisfy such a lien.

**1850**

It isn't just the need to be fair to recipients in different situations. People on welfare are supported by taxpayers. No one denies that. There are thousands of hardworking Ontario families who don't own their own homes and who have never needed income support from the government. These people need to know that their hard-earned dollars and their tax dollars provide support where needed, which is appropriate, but not are intended to satisfy an unrecoverable increase in assets. People on welfare in this province should not end up better for having been on welfare than the people who are working.

Financial assistance will no longer be paid directly to young people under the age of 18. Instead it will be paid to a trustee or guardian, but only if the young person is attending school or an approved alternative learning program. It is again an instance of mutual responsibilities. It is aimed at better, fairer outcomes for recipients as well as for the taxpayer.

In part II, the section covering decisions, reviews and appeals, we find, for example, authority to provide assistance on an interim basis while an appeal is under way. Even before a formal appeal begins, there is a requirement for an internal review by the delivery agent. This will provide quicker decisions for clients. It's intended to reduce the overload on the formal appeal process which exists now. It will help resolve misunderstandings much more quickly and clarify what is being disputed.

There are of course rules on how appeals are to be made, what decisions may be appealed and who may make those appeals. There are also rules to prevent unnecessary and inappropriate use of that appeals process. The person applying has the clear onus to satisfy the tribunal that the administrator's decision was wrong in the first instance. The tribunal can also refuse to hear frivolous appeals.

Ontario Works is a cost-shared program between the province and municipalities. Part III establishes the basis for that cost-sharing, including how the process will work in territories without municipal organization. At the same time, there is a need to consolidate the delivery of the new program. This will meet our government's commitment to eliminate waste and duplication and to reduce administrative costs. This should go a long way to helping municipalities in the coming months to reduce their costs of operation. As already announced, the ministry is working to reduce the more than 200 municipalities directly delivering assistance to approximately 50.

The government also agrees that first nations should continue to deliver social assistance programs to their own people.

Part IV of the act provides for the creation of a new Social Benefits Tribunal. This will replace the existing Social Assistance Review Board. Members of the Legislature should, however, be aware of the major policy decision underlying the creation of this new body. The proposed legislation establishes a more rigorous process for adjudicating disputes over decisions affecting eligibility, types and amounts of benefits and other matters.

Finally, we are proposing to remove jurisdiction from the tribunal to consider constitutional issues. The reason for this proposed change is simple: Constitutional questions involve complex legal issues and can have far-reaching consequences that are better addressed, in our opinion, by the courts.

Part V provides for a variety of general powers and authorities which are required by the ministry and municipalities. The purpose is to support accountability, enforcement, compliance with the act and regulations, as well as the overall integrity of the Ontario Works program. It will permit the collection and disclosure of personal information while setting strict limits and safeguards to protect and preserve confidentiality. This section will help the government to combat fraud to protect the system for people in need. It permits the sharing and comparing of information between jurisdictions. The purpose is to assist in law enforcement programs. It also is intended to assist in the administration and in research relating to fraud.

We do intend to protect the privacy of individuals, and do not intend to compromise on the privacy issue at all. We intend to reduce and eliminate, for example, the use of false or multiple identities and the illegal collection of benefits from more than one program, and to end the collection of welfare while in prison. These measures laid out in this section will help us to achieve those objectives.

Our government has already put an information-sharing agreement in place to prevent the collection of welfare in jail. As a result, inmates have had their welfare benefits cut off. This legislation further strengthens the ministry's ability to exchange information with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services to identify a prisoner who is receiving welfare or someone on welfare who is being sent to jail.

The act also provides authority for new measures such as finger scanning and other innovative security technologies to further combat fraud and prevent taxpayers' dollars from being wasted. As the minister mentioned, finger scanning is not fingerprinting as it is generally known. Its only purpose is to prevent fraud and to protect the welfare system for those who really need it. It will not be used until it has been thoroughly piloted and evaluated for its objective. We are also aware that there are many new technologies being developed which may prove even more effective in ensuring security and privacy, and we will be considering all of those options.

The legislation would also provide authority for the ministry and each delivery agent to establish a social assistance fraud control unit.

Of the three schedules mentioned earlier, schedule D, which contains traditional provisions, will likely be the most pertinent to the members of this House. This schedule provides for the orderly transfer of responsibilities and recipients from the old programs to the new programs. It also allows for the phased implementation of both Ontario Works and the Ontario disability support plan.

The Ontario Works Act is the legal framework for a new era of welfare assistance in Ontario. If approved by the Legislature, we believe it will provide significant improvement for people who truly need help and for taxpayers, as well as those who administer and deliver the programs. We also believe it will offer significant improvements for the communities of Ontario and the members of this Legislature in the exercise of our responsibilities to the people of Ontario. It will write an important chapter of progress in the social systems of Ontario.

I referred earlier to the success stories coming out of Ontario Works, and I know this legislation will produce thousands more. Land reclamation is under way. Conservation authorities are conducting research. Communities win, local organizations win, Ontario Works participants

win and taxpayers win. Ontario Works participants win because they are significantly closer to becoming employed and achieving self-sufficiency, and taxpayers win because fraud and abuse of the system will not be tolerated any longer. To put it in a phrase, Ontario Works works.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I am always intrigued with the speeches that are written by the ministry or the Premier's office, whoever does so. They do an excellent job of writing those speeches. The members must get tired, though, because in the opposition, even if you read your speech, you have to actually write it yourself. These speeches seem to sound the same. It's a government message that you get out each time, so I'm always intrigued by those speeches.

What I look at is that it sounds very reasonable when the ministry or whoever writes it reads it until you look at the exceptions. I hope the government will look at the people who are the exceptions in the system, the people who would not benefit by this legislation.

I don't think anybody quarrels with the fact that, first of all, you want all fraud removed from the social service system. I can't think of anybody who should quarrel with that legitimately in this House, and so you don't find that kind of disagreement.

Second, I think the goal of everyone is to have everyone who is capable of working doing so by providing those kinds of job opportunities. I think the member would know that what's happening lately is that many of the jobs — he has listed some where people are working — that used to be available to people who might not have an educational background or the technical skills to be able to take advantage of some of the good job opportunities out there are gone now, and you're finding that people are absolutely desperate.

There's another group that I think you see an awful lot of on the streets today, and these are ex-psychiatric patients. What I say to people when they say, "These people should be working," my first question to them, "Would you hire them for your workplace?" Very often that is where the support declines.

**1900**

**Ms Lankin:** I'm surprised during the member's speech that the member for Scarborough East didn't stand on a point of order, like he did earlier, and suggested that petitions couldn't be read. The rules are very clear that speeches can't be read, but it seems that there's a differential standard being applied here. Particularly it's interesting when we see the government line being read out into the record of the Legislature.

I have to say that there are a number of things in the member's speech, in terms of the rhetoric of it, that I would agree with. Who could disagree with trying to go after fraud? Who could disagree with trying to give people a hand up and put them back to work? But the facts are very clear. Your Ontario Works program, your workfare program, is a dismal failure. You look at community after community where there are barely any people registered, where people are supposed to be getting new skills and they're out painting picnic tables, which by the way used to be part of a multiskilled job of a maintenance worker or other in a municipality, taking away work from people, like in North Bay. The agency which worked with placing people into jobs, that's now being done by workfare recipients, and you're taking away real work. Let's talk about things like how this will apply to people whom you now apply it to, like 60-to-65-year-olds who are going to have to participate in workfare. What opportunities for jobs are there? It's jobs that you need.

The other thing I want to point out is that the member, other than referencing that one section of the bill dealt with disabilities, spent his whole time talking about the Ontario Works Act. I actually think that's appropriate, because I think they're two very separate pieces of legislation. It is not reasonable that these two bills have been lumped together when I, for example, as a member would probably, if there were amendments accepted by the government, support the disability support income program but am very opposed to the direction you're going with Ontario Works. It's an example that this government wants to ram things through and combine bills that are totally different, dealing with different communities and having different elements.

I would suggest to the government once again, divide the bill and let's have reasonable debate on both of them.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I rise to congratulate my friend from York-Mackenzie for his remarks explaining, I think in great detail, what is in this particular bill. It is a complicated piece of legislation which requires it being written down, because we are held to such a high standard when it comes to delivering the truth in this matter.

There are a couple of things I want to remark upon. I want the people who are listening or watching in the audience here or via television to know that this is the first overhaul in 40 years. This legislation has been encrusted like barnacles on a sinking ship. The archaic matter, as my friend refers to, is the fact that this piece of legislation has not had significant legislative redraft in over 40 years. I think that is a very important point to recall.

What we're talking about here, as the honourable member has explained, is increasing responsibility by the individual recipient to ensure the outcomes are the ones that the recipient wants and that society wants. He mentioned in particular the provisions in terms of financial assistance for those under 18. They are held in trust, they are not delivered to the person in particular, to that person's doorstep. But we're saying, if you are in school, if you are trying to get ahead in life, which is what they should be doing at that age, under 18 years of age, we have a system that will help you get to where you want to go. I think that's an important aspect of this bill.

Another important aspect of this bill which the opposition belittles is the anti-fraud mechanisms. When someone takes welfare money as a result of fraud they are taking it away from other recipients who deserve that. This piece of

legislation puts this in the proper context for the first time in 40 years, and I'm pleased to support it.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I want to emphasize something that the member for York-Mackenzie may not have elaborated on enough, and maybe for good reason, and that is where seniors between the ages of 60 and 65 will be required to join the workfare activities. These people may be from a generation of employers who didn't provide pensions, who didn't provide security for their employees that younger people may enjoy. But what this government is saying, of course, is: "That doesn't matter. You're going to have to go out and you're going to have to find a job." There may be a spouse —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** If I'm wrong, then I'd like it clarified, that's all.

There may be a spouse who didn't work outside the home, and we know that much of the work in the past raising families has been done inside the home. I think it's unconscionable that these individuals who are entering the later years of their lives, who may not have the training to join this workfare that the government is proposing, will have to. I think it's a bit of an attack — more than a bit of an attack — I think it is an attack on the seniors of our province, and I would hope, if I am wrong about this, that somewhere, some time this evening someone will make it very clear to the seniors in my riding that they will not then be required to do this.

**Mr Klees:** I won't read this part of my comments, and my apologies to the honourable member for Beaches-Woodbine. I am not nearly as good at speeches as you are, but there's a reason for having been very precise about the discussion of this bill, because it has been very obvious over time that many members opposite failed to read the legislation and in their comments and in their debate deal with issues that are not factual, raise fears on the part of the people of this province that are unfounded. We felt as a government it was critical that members of this House understand the details of the legislation because chances are very good that they have not acquainted themselves with those details.

I'd also like to say that based on my personal experience travelling this province over the last number of weeks there are many participants in Ontario Works who do not have the same view that the opposition has of Ontario Works.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

**Mr Klees:** They welcome the opportunity to participate in meaningful community projects. I'm surprised that the member for Beaches-Woodbine would make the comments she does regarding Ontario Works and the fact that these are not meaningful, because when someone understands that people who are trapped on welfare are looking for the opportunity to overcome the barriers that have kept them trapped, then they will know that this legislation is precisely what this province has needed for years and that the parties opposite, the members opposite, did not have the courage to bring to this province the solution to Ontario's welfare problem.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I'd like to begin my remarks on the Ontario disability support program by making two points. First of all, I cannot suggest strongly enough that the minister release the regulations pertaining to this bill as soon as possible. It is almost impossible to address the most important aspects of the bill without them. Second, broad and extensive hearings on the bill and its regulations are essential. From what I have heard from the disabled community, I am convinced that we need to hear how those with every type of disability will be affected by the profound changes that the government has brought forward in this bill, because its implications are enormous.

We need to make certain that the suffering of the most vulnerable in our society is not increased, as seems quite possible from our reading of the bill and that of the experts we have spoken to. I can't stress enough that a great many knowledgeable people in the disabled community are extremely concerned about the implications of this legislation. Contrary to what you might believe, support for these changes is not unanimous.

**1910**

Last Friday I had the opportunity to hear the concerns of the mental health community in Ottawa-Carleton, together with the members from Ottawa South and Ottawa Centre, Mr McGuinty and Mr Patten. It was unfortunate that no one from the government thought they should be in attendance, because the insight we got from that forum was extremely valuable. I would like to convey some of their concerns to you for your consideration. I will quote from their documentation, copies of which I will be happy to share with anyone who is interested.

First of all: "The tone of the act is very punitive in nature. As consumer-survivors of mental health services, we are not criminals but are individuals with a recurrent and cyclical mental illness, and we need support."

"In attempting to be accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario, there is an implication that people receiving income assistance and individuals with disabilities do not pay taxes like everyone else in Ontario. We know that this is not true."

This interpretation of the bill by those who will be affected by it should be taken to heart by all of us. It has always been true, and continues to be so in times of financial restraint, that the strength of our society is measured by how we treat the most vulnerable. I'm sure that the minister is attempting to create the best system, but these interpretations must be taken seriously.

A major problem with everyone we have spoken to lies in the definition of "disability." It is a fact that 90% of people with disabilities are considered to be mild to moderately disabled. With the definition of "disability" we are given in the present bill, the system appears to be designed to cut out the majority of those now considered disabled.

According to the definition provided, to be considered to be a person with a disability you must meet all of the

following criteria: You must have a substantial physical or mental impairment which is expected to last at least one year. The impairment can be either continuous or recurrent. You must prove that the direct and cumulative effect of the impairment causes substantial restrictions to all of the following: your ability to attend daily to your personal care, like washing and dressing, and your ability to function daily in the community, like shopping, attending events or volunteering, and your ability to function in your workplace on a daily basis.

I'd like to quote again from the mental health community we met with:

"The definition of 'disability' does not take into account consideration of the unpredictable nature of mental illness. To be eligible for income assistance, we will have to be defined as having a mental impairment. We do not all see ourselves that way. Due to the recurrent and cyclical nature of mental illness, it might not appear to last for at least one year.

"There will be periods of time in which we are perceived as being too well to qualify because of community support services, medication or reduced stress. Many individuals with mental illness still need income support during these periods.

"The definition requires a person to demonstrate impairment in three areas: self-care, functioning in the community and functioning in the workplace. These criteria are not adequate measures of eligibility for people with mental illness."

It is actually rather rare that an individual with any disability is not able to do at least some of the activities described. The fact that substantial restrictions must apply in all these areas for a person to be considered eligible makes it pretty clear that the definition would be more restrictive than it is now. This new definition has therefore caused a lot of stress to a great many people in the disabled community. That includes people suffering from lupus, kidney disease, manic-depression, HIV and AIDS.

Often a person's disability prevents them from being able to work, but they can look after their personal care and function in the community. How will they be treated under the new system? We have received many assurances from the government but we can accept none of them until they are reflected in the legislation. To address these concerns, the definition should be changed to recognize that a substantial restriction in even one of these areas be sufficient for eligibility.

Another problem with the definition as written is the stipulation that the direct and cumulative effect of the impairment causes the disability. However, in many cases the indirect effect of the treatment may be so debilitating that the treatment impairs the individual. Again according to the mental health community in Ottawa:

"The side effects of medication can be draining and put limits on the amount of time an individual can be active each day. The physical and mental demands of doing paid or unpaid work can be stressful and thereby increase the possibility of relapse. Doing volunteer work or community work does not mean we have the ability to always be paid for our work. There are different demands on a person's stamina and productivity in a paid versus unpaid work setting."

I've seen the recommendation that the definition be changed to recognize this reality and be clarified to refer to the direct or causally connected effect of an impairment. That change would more fairly reflect the reality of individuals who are trying to function under often crushing personal circumstances. They should not have to choose between receiving treatment and letting their situations deteriorate so that they can be eligible for income support.

Another area of significant concern is the legislation's outright refusal to consider addiction as a disability. This is completely contrary to the accepted view of the medical and psychiatric community. It is well known that addiction is often inextricably linked to mental illness to the point that it is difficult to determine what came first. The exclusion of the addicted sets an unfortunate precedent of passing judgement on various disabilities and granting support on the basis of that judgement.

There are now people who have been waiting two to five years to be accepted on to family support. Many who now qualify and are merely waiting to get on may never be accepted. There has been some feeling in the community that the interpretation of existing definitions of "disability" has been slowly tightened over time, making people with disabilities less likely to be eligible for benefits under programs like the Canada pension plan and workers' compensation.

The accumulated stress that all these changes are causing people who are least able to cope with them is terribly unfair. Again I would like to call on the minister to release the regulations now, to clear up the uncertainty these people are facing.

Although I haven't been able to verify it, some in the disabled community have told me that there has recently been a surge in reassessments for those presently receiving family benefits. This could be seen as an attempt to pare down the numbers of recipients before grandfathering secures them under the new system. Whether this is an accurate picture or not, it is a measure of the fear in the community that hard times are coming for a great many people who will not be considered disabled enough under the new system.

The Ontario Disability Support Program Act and the Ontario Works Act both contain significant changes to the appeals process. Under the Ontario disability support program, the appeals process is seriously compromised. The nature of the information required, the time lines that must be adhered to and the options that are available for appeal seriously undermine the effectiveness and fairness of the appeal process. According to the legislation: "If the director's decision is not appealed to the tribunal within the time required under this act, no further appeal lies to the tribunal or a court with regard to that decision."

Given the nature of the disabilities of many vulnerable people, these provisions are unnecessarily punitive. Many of those with mental illnesses have an aversion to officials and bureaucracies and have a very difficult time managing

their day-to-day responsibilities. To have them jump through legal hoops is just asking for them to fail in securing their rights, and through technicalities. That is hardly fair.

**1920**

Under the Ontario disability support program, the only guaranteed right of appeal relates to benefits for a disabled child. There is an outright prohibition on appeal for the denial of benefits or amount of entitlement, which should be guaranteed as it is in the Ontario Works program. This is outright discrimination against disabled people. In the words of one advocate, "When one is talking about basic subsistence, the ability to house and feed oneself, the right to appeal becomes absolutely fundamental."

Exempt from appeal is the following open-ended list, and I quote from the legislation:

"1. A decision respecting discretionary income support.

"2. A decision of the Lieutenant Governor in Council respecting income support in exceptional circumstances.

"3. A decision to provide a portion of income support directly to a third party.

"4. A decision to appoint a person to act on behalf of a recipient.

"5. A variation, refusal or cancellation of income support caused by an amendment to this act or the regulations."

And again,

"6. A prescribed decision." And we don't know the regulations.

Each of these exemptions from appeal is extraordinary. Quite independent of the Substitute Decisions Act, the government is permitting the appointment of a third party to manage or receive a recipient's financial benefits. That includes a landlord to whom rent may be paid directly. That landlord arguably may take advantage of the situation to not live up to their commitments, because no appeal is possible. That, to me, is incredible. There must be a right to appeal the appointment of a third person to receive benefits on behalf of a recipient in order to prevent abuses against them.

Again, a person will not be able to appeal the change of benefit levels, their cancellation or refusal should any changes be made to the regulations governing this act.

The legislation also leaves open the door to refusing appeals to decisions it has not yet decided on in the regulations, just to make sure.

I quote from an excellent brief from the HIV-AIDS community:

"The loss of fundamental rights and the potential for abuses makes the lack of a right to appeal these decisions unacceptable. Furthermore, if a recipient is not mentally incompetent, why should their money be managed for them against their will? Why should disabled people be treated like second-class citizens? We believe that it is essential for the dignity of human beings to have as much control over their lives as possible. Disabled people should not be punished for being disabled.

"By disallowing appeals in these areas, Bill 142 creates situations where individuals will be forced to turn to courts for relief. The process of judicial review of administrative decision-making is lengthy and complicated, and recipients will probably need legal representation in order to pursue it. Clogging the courts with these kinds of applications is not a reasonable desired outcome for a government. Therefore, recipients must be able to appeal these kinds of decisions to the tribunal."

The difficulty that many see in the role of the Social Benefits Tribunal is its lack of independence as a quasi-judicial body free to consider established law. Instead, the government-appointed body will be bound by the policy of the government of the day.

I quote from the bill: "The minister may make regulations prescribing policy statements which shall be applied in the interpretation and application of this act and the regulations." Very clear. I believe the scope and breadth of concern in the disabled community about the proposed appeal process indicates a major problem with the legislation.

Another problem is the new approach to viewing the benefit system as not one of entitlement on the basis of need, but as a loan. The expectation that individuals with disabilities may one day have to repay the government for benefits received, or have their dependants do so, is an incredible burden. Should an overpayment be made through a bureaucratic error, repayments can be extracted from either the recipient or their spouse. The suggestion that a lien may be placed on a disabled person's home as a condition of receiving benefits is also creating a great deal of concern. There is room in the legislation also for the imposition of a copayment for receiving employment supports. That will likely be imposed on the highest income earners. Nevertheless, it is a precedent that bears watching.

I wonder if this is not a trend, an indication of a general change in philosophy. If so, I think it poses a danger to how we have come to view our society. We have always prided ourselves on being more compassionate than others. We've always believed that if something terrible should happen to us, the system would look after us. After all, we have paid taxes all our working lives to support that system.

I know of a man who experienced a terrible accident and was no longer able to work. He was suddenly made incredibly familiar with the system he had paid into for a long time and believed he could count on. He was humiliated, and frankly broke down in tears, when he described his first visit from a social services worker. He had to empty his pockets to show her how much money he had left, to prove how much he was entitled to.

I really don't believe that many people in Ontario would expect a harsh accounting of every dollar spent on helping the most vulnerable among us. I think we are proud to help them achieve or maintain lives of dignity and self-respect. I think those are the values we've all been raised with as individuals. I believe those values can be reflected in the way we manage public policy.

The concerns that we have heard in the community are extensive and substantial. There is no way I can do justice to the people for whom I am speaking in the time I have allotted to me. My main concern is this: that you listen to them, really listen. It is obvious from the problems with this bill that whatever consultations you have engaged in were not thorough enough. That is why the broadest public hearings possible are absolutely crucial.

We have a responsibility, as representatives of all the people of Ontario, to ensure that public policy is shaped to discriminate against no one, either deliberately or unwittingly. I have brought to you just some of the concerns I have heard, without, I hope, any kind of political slant to them. I would just ask that we all work together to make sure no one is left out or treated unfairly. Thank you for your attention.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I listened with great care to the comments made by our colleague, and I tell you, I appreciate his focus on the portion of the bill that deals with the Ontario disability support program. You know as well as he that there has been some cautious enthusiasm by some quarters for this program. He's expressed something far less than cautious enthusiasm; he's expressed some great concern that I tell you I share.

It's a cruel hoax that this government, with its Newspeak, its persistence in neologisms, tries to paint a picture that is the absolute contrary to what will be the reality once its legislation passes. That is as applicable to Bill 142 as it is to any other number of pieces of legislation.

Yes, it's providing its tax breaks, two thirds of which will go to the top 10% of income earners, and it is making some of the most vulnerable people in our community, in our society, in our province pay for that tax break, bear the brunt of that tax break, the very people who our colleague from Carleton East addressed during the course of his 20 minutes here.

I call upon the government to do more than merely listen to the submissions. I think this government should acknowledge that this whole bill, Bill 142, is in no way a positive or a progressive reform of welfare or assistance legislation in this province, but indeed puts the poorest and the most vulnerable in our society at even greater risk, ignores their needs, and again does it all for the sake of a accommodating this government's rich and wealthy friends.

**1930**

**Mr Carroll:** I appreciate the opportunity to make a couple of comments on the speech from the member for Carleton East. He made reference to the fact that many people in Ottawa-Carleton do not like the new definition of "disabled." That may be so, but there are also many people in the Ottawa-Carleton area who are very much in favour of the new definition. I'd like to quote from a couple of them.

Peter McGrath of the Ottawa-Carleton Independent Living Centres I presume is familiar to the member: "I think it's good news.... I think most people with disabilities in Ontario will be happy to know that they can...if they leave the welfare rolls and get into a support program that will enable them to enter the job market, that is the ultimate goal of most people and I think that if it moves that way it'll be a positive step forward."

The Ottawa Citizen in an editorial on June 11, again I'm sure a publication that the member is familiar with: "Getting rid of the 'permanently unemployable' tag is an excellent move. It was more than demeaning. It was also inaccurate for a large number of people who had to accept it in order to get the help they needed."

Even more current and up to date, September 2, the Ottawa Citizen:

"The government of Ontario's new plan for the financial support of the disabled, the Ontario disability support program...will bring a welcome restoration of the dignity for the disabled."

It goes on to quote an example: A person with a relatively minor ailment, such as a bad back, can be considered "disabled" if he has little education and lives in an area where there's only heavy work available. By including these people in the label "disabled," the FBA "encourages them to do nothing to change their circumstances." We trap them in the system. "The government should be congratulated, not reviled, for removing this pitfall."

As a final comment, it says, "But so far, the disabled have nothing to fear from the Tory plans." All from Ottawa-Carleton.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I would certainly like to add my congratulations to the member for Carleton East for his very thoughtful comments. As always, certainly a member who fights for justice all the time and who I think spoke very eloquently in those terms tonight.

If I may just address even the comments that the member for Chatham-Kent made earlier, those articles are fine to read. I think what's important to note here is that the member very clearly was trying to make a real effort to speak to the minister and to speak to this bill on specific concerns he had, and in that sense was not operating in a partisan manner at all. He has some concerns. He has looked at it carefully.

I know the minister herself was listening to the member's remarks, and that's very important because what he was talking about are people who truly are most vulnerable in our society, people who need those of us in the Legislature who truly, truly care for all people in the province, who care about those issues. His concerns about the definition of "disability," his concerns about the fact that the people on disability who will be eligible will not have the same appeal process rights as others will have: The member has addressed these issues in a very productive and a very helpful way. I hope the minister was listening and I hope all the members in the House would recognize that he's looked at that bill in careful manner. There's often criticism that members are not dealing directly with the bill at hand in any kind of formal fashion. I think the member for Carleton East did that in a very specific way and I can give him nothing but credit.

It's important to note that there are some aspects of this bill that need to be dealt with. There's going to be a need for consultation after the fact. There's a need to release the regulations which are attached to this bill. The one thing that has become very clear is that the devil truly is in the details, and I think we have to continue to call upon the minister to do that, but I will perhaps get an opportunity later to speak more on this.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I also want to commend the member for Carleton East for his thoughtful comments this evening on this legislation. It affects those in our community who are most vulnerable and in a position to most need our help, and so we have to be thoughtful in anything we do that affects their lives.

Anybody who knows the member for Carleton East would not classify him as somebody who is out there on any kind of fringe. He's a very thoughtful person who even I believe has some military background in his past and brings to this House some very detailed concerns that he has around the piece of the act that deals with those who have disabilities of various sorts.

He points to the fact that many of the most damaging cutbacks which are likely to occur in this act are not set out directly in the act itself. They'll happen after the government passes the act, when the provincial cabinet and the Ministry of Community and Social Services enact regulations and policy guidelines to implement the Ontario Works Act and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act. This act gives the government very wide powers to make major changes in the system through regulation and policy guidelines, such as declaring whole classes of people totally ineligible for social assistance or setting time limits as to how long people can receive social assistance.

I warn people as they listen to the way this is rolled out and spun by the government as the best thing since sliced bread that the bad news is yet to come. The ability of this government, the power that this government has given itself by way of regulation to enact regulations, to enact laws and rules, is frightening to say the least.

**Mr Morin:** I want to thank sincerely the members who have listened attentively to what I had to say. My message was very, very clear. All you have to do is to take the act itself, read it, and if you're not confused, let me assure you that you're one of the few. All it says constantly is, "as prescribed in the regulations." We haven't seen the regulations. How can we comment intelligently on something we don't even know?

The people I've contacted are not only a few people at the Citizen or other newspapers who are commenting. Those are remarks that were not researched properly, in my opinion.

All you have to do again is to read the act itself, understand it. Any government — that is addressed to the Liberal, to the NDP, to the Conservative — that embarks on a path that will not take care of the disabled, of the people who cannot fend for themselves, is a government doomed to failure. That's all I'm saying. We all have to participate, to listen to those people in need, to help them out. There's nothing wrong in making an honest dollar, but there is something wrong when we're not capable of sharing it with others.

That is, to me, the opinion of many of my colleagues. That is so important. So all I ask you, I beg you, is to look at the act, understand the issues. You have disabled people in your community. Go and meet with them. Many of them are scared of the government. They can't even talk to an MPP. They are worried. They look at an MPP as an authority, somebody you cannot even approach. Go and listen to them like I did last Friday. Go and talk to them. Listen attentively and you will feel that it is your responsibility to fight for them, because if you don't, you're not doing your job properly, and if you're not capable of voicing the opinion of the people who cannot fend for themselves, you don't deserve to be in this House. That is our job.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr Kormos:** First, I want to put this in a little bit of context, especially in terms of some of the things that I've had an opportunity to do over the last week almost week.

Last Wednesday I was up in Ottawa on the picket line with Bradson security guards, Steelworkers who have been locked out of their workplace, their jobs, for over nine months now through the coldest of the winter months in Ottawa, locked out and with no overtures from their bosses, part of the big Minto corp, with a view to negotiating a fair settlement, and on a daily basis watching scabs cross their picket line doing their work with the complicity of the federal government, because the vast majority of the work sites for these Bradson workers are at federal government locations. I say complicity of the federal government because the federal government, both before and since the most federal election, has condoned the scabs who come on a daily basis to take away work and to take away income from these Bradson security guards, some 300-plus women and men who work hard and work professionally for what have been modest wages and for what, even if they're successful in their demands for some fair and modest increases, will remain among the lowest-income people in our province.

**1940**

I mention that in the context of Bill 142 because on Saturday this past weekend I was again on a picket line, this time with SEIU workers, Service Employees International Union, women who are parimutuel clerks at the Flamboro offtrack betting, as it was done in Welland in this instance. Mary Hudak, I've known her and her family for years, and her sisters, all of them having worked professionally and worked hard as parimutuel clerks, now find themselves locked out as on a daily basis scabs cross their picket line in Mike Harris's Ontario to take their jobs and their income, an income which I tell you is not a liveable wage. It isn't, which is why those women and men who are parimutuel clerks at Flamboro seek some parity, something akin to parity with for instance their colleagues in the Jockey Club parimutuel system who struggled in their own right.

I was with those women, those working women who are witnessing their jobs being taken on a daily basis by scabs here. They're Mike Harris scabs, because Bill 40 had outlawed scab workers, scab labour in this province. Bill 40, by virtue of the outlaw of scab labour, had created an era of labour peace in this province that we certainly haven't seen since Mike Harris and his crew were elected here to Queen's Park.

Just one more: Yesterday of course I was with working women and men in the Labour Day parade up in Merritton.

**Mr Bradley:** I was there.

**Mr Kormos:** Jim Bradley, a colleague from St Catharines, was there as well.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: We've indulged the member opposite. Over 20% of his time in the speaking rotation has already been used and he has not even come close to referring to any specifics in this bill. I wonder if you could remind the member that it's a standing order of this House that he should be on the topic. The topic before us is a particular bill. It isn't about rewriting history, it isn't about hearing about his personal political —

**The Acting Speaker:** I've got the message, member for Scarborough East. I think the member for Scarborough East has a good point. I'd like the member for Welland-Thorold to talk specifically about the bill, under our rules.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. To you and to him, I'm a heck of a lot closer than he could ever imagine. If we don't talk about this bill in the context of everything that's being done to working people and to seniors and to students and to the sick and to the unemployed, if we don't speak about this bill in the context of that, we're speaking about it in the sort of vacuum these guys would love to have it referred to.

Yesterday I was at the Labour Day parade in Merritton, along with Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, who could have —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Perhaps he was a little tired yesterday but he was there none the less. He hadn't worked up the same sweat that I had, Lord knows why —

**Mr Bradley:** Good to see you walking.

**Mr Kormos:** It was good to see me walking — but I tell you, there with public sector and private sector workers, members of the Canadian Auto Workers, CUPE, OPSEU, SEIU, some of the same strikers, people who are watching their jobs stolen by scabs every day.

**Mr Bradley:** What were they chanting?

**Mr Kormos:** As they passed the reviewing stand I heard something akin to, "Tory, Tory, Tory, out, out, out," if not those exact words.

Let me tell you why I mention and why I preface what I've got to say here with my reference to working people in this province. There are no two ways about it: The attack on the poorest, the commitment to cut by 21.6% the allowances provided to the poorest, to the unemployed in our province had, and I acknowledge this, some currency among a whole lot of Ontarians, including some of the same workers — they've admitted as much to me — I was walking with on the picket lines last Wednesday up at the Bradson strike in Ottawa, some of the same workers — they've told me as much — I was walking with on the picket lines at the Flamboro offtrack betting in Welland, like Mary Hudak and her colleagues from the SEIU, and had some currency with the trade unionists, the workers, the auto workers, the steelworkers, the municipal workers, the health care workers, the teachers; they were there yesterday too.

These were people who had worked hard and paid taxes and from their perspective had paid and paid and paid, seemingly with no relief. What they have learned in the course of two years is that the attack on the poor, the attack on single mothers, the attack on kids who live in poverty in our province by the Harris government quickly grew into an attack on them as well and into an attack on the right of workers to collectively bargain, and that there's a scheme here, there's a purpose here, there's a motive here.

This government promised 725,000 new jobs — not even close yet. It promised 725,000 new jobs, and is not even close. The fact is that unemployment in the Niagara region remains at the double-digit level, and for people under 25 it's twice that. I'm seeing the tragedy of ongoing poverty among children, among their parents and, more sadly, among seniors. We've already had some reference to what Bill 142 does to seniors aged 60 to 64, and I know a lot of them: folks who have worked all their lives, just like many people in that age group who were abandoned when Wabasso shut down in Welland. They found themselves in an age group with double-digit unemployment like there is in Niagara, and I'm convinced across the vast part of this province, folks for whom there were no employment opportunities.

I understand that those who are already receiving under the Family Benefits Act are going to be entitled to those same benefits by virtue of being — what do you call it? — grandfathered. With Mike Harris's new legislation, those folks sometimes are parents or grandparents or neighbours who find themselves jobless through no fault of their own, yet in that age range they are going to find themselves forced into the deepest of poverty by this government that in Bill 142 has mounted a very concentrated attack on the elderly, and very clearly on the elderly worker who falls into this abyss of unemployment through no fault of their own. We know it. These folks are going to have benefit allowances that are but a fraction of what they were entitled to under the Family Benefits Act, which is being abolished by this legislation, and they're going to bear the brunt: They're going to help pay for this government's tax break for the very richest, two thirds of which is going to go to the top 10% of income earners.

A whole lot of people in this province some two years ago found the prospect of clamping down on welfare recipients perhaps something worth considering. Many of them considered it. They found the prospect of a tax break — yes, some of the same workers I was with in Ottawa on Wednesday and in Welland on Saturday and at

the Labour Day parade in Merritton on Monday, some of those same workers told me so, but they understand now that there is no tax break for working people, that there's only a bigger and bigger burden to carry and a higher and higher risk of unemployment, be they public sector or private sector.

**1950**

It's abominable that this bill could be put forward for second reading by this government, this attack on the poor and the unemployed, when some of Canada's major banks just last week announced yet higher profits for their most recent quarter, higher than the profits of the quarter before and higher than the profits for the year before that and the year before that, billions and billions and billions of dollars of new profits. And these same banks, how do they respond? They respond by laying off more and more people and eliminating more and more jobs and increasing the number of unemployed in this province who are being forced into poverty and despair by this government with its policies that drag us back into the 1950s.

The government talks about jobs, but this government has either been incapable of or unwilling to tell us what these so-called new net jobs are. We know that the vast majority of the jobs that this government talks about are temporary. They're part-time and they're almost inevitably minimum wage or, with the increasing number of schemes and scams that are available to bosses, increasingly subminimum wage. This government has either been incapable or unwilling to tell us about these so-called net jobs. These aren't jobs; these are merely prolongations of the despair that people have increasingly felt under this government's boot.

I'll tell you, this government has no qualms about setting its sights on single mothers or on the elderly, has no qualms about setting its sights on working people, but when will this government be so brave as to start making the banks, with their tremendous, multibillion-dollar profits — when will this government display some of the courage that would be required of them to make the banks start to pay their fair share?

Workfare: Workfare ain't working. The fact is that only a handful of communities have been participating in these fraudulent programs. The fact is that it sounds good to those who want to see the poorest pay some sort of penance for their poverty. The fact is that seniors, 60 to 64, are going to be compelled to participate in these phoney schemes as well. But we know that if you're really going to change the plight of the unemployed and the poor, first of all you've got to make sure that there are jobs available for them to participate in, and this government has failed miserably in that regard.

The fact is that you've got to provide meaningful educational upgrades. We know that many of the poor in this province have far lower than acceptable academic or educational backgrounds. It's not always the case, but a big chunk do, and unless and until we commit ourselves to making educational upgrading available to them, all the promises in the world mean zip. They need specific job training and job skills, so they can assume some of the positions that might be made available over the course of time.

But at the end of the day, the real issue is this government's failure to reduce the levels of unemployment in this province and its desire — and it does, of course, take credit for new net jobs without any reduction in unemployment — to increasingly see jobs that are minimum or subminimum wage, that are temporary and part-time.

It would be easy to suggest that the government was merely being malicious in pursuing this course of action, but I think not.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'd say they are.

**Mr Kormos:** Oh, no, I think not.

**Mr Bisson:** I think they are.

**Mr Kormos:** There's malice inherent in it, but there's something far more meaningful. This Bill 142 is dragging us back into the 1950s and, let me tell you, folks in my community understand the 1950s and the relief offices and the arbitrariness and the shame and the despair all too well. They can tell you with a clarity of memory of their visits to the relief office with their hands out, the very same manner in which this government's going to be compelling the seniors and the poor and the single mothers and their kids to come to them.

I'm convinced that this is part and parcel of a drive that is going to create two very distinct groups in our community, in our society: a very small but very wealthy group of haves that this government is not just disinclined but thoroughly unwilling to confront, indeed is dedicated to assisting, and a much larger group of have-nots, including the unemployed as well as growing numbers of working poor. This government is committed to driving down the minimum wage and it's in the process and it has been in the process of doing it for two years now.

This government is committed to destroying free collective bargaining for workers and it's in the process by virtue of Bill 136 of doing that very specifically to public sector workers here in the province of Ontario right now. This government shares the same goals of the corporate sector, which are to drive down wages and reduce as many jobs as possible, and it's going to give the tools to the private sector to achieve that end as well.

There's going to be great wealth — well, there is great wealth being generated here in Ontario. We know it. This government's commitment is to isolating ownership of that wealth in fewer and fewer and fewer hands, and it has been eminently successful over the course of a mere two years. The seniors, the poor, the unemployed, the ill-educated, the victims of private sector restructuring are to be called upon to pay for Mike Harris's tax break for the very rich, two thirds of which goes to the top 10% of income earners. Those are the facts. Those are the numbers. It's unavoidable; it goes beyond cruel to criminal. I tell you, the people of Ontario are anxious for an opportunity to indict this government, and not only indict it but sentence is to a mere and unpleasant part of our history.

I'm voting against Bill 142. Bill 142 is a fraud. Bill 142 is designed to create more poverty and is nothing of what it speaks to be.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I just want to take an opportunity to make some comments on the speech by the member for Welland-Thorold. We did find out a fair bit about his weekend itinerary and some of the picket lines that he has walked on recently, but I have to say that it's obvious that he has researched the bill to some extent because he did make some comments that were actually on point with respect to the people 60 to 64 years of age. Yes, we are changing some of the provisions in the legislation. We are making a change so that the disabled community is dealt with separately. We have been told and I have been told as a member by people in the disabled community that they want to be treated separately from the other people on welfare.

Quite frankly, I think welfare reform is something that the people in my riding, regardless of the party they support, want to see. They want to see some significant reform so that there is a real tightening down of the whole system. They want to see that disabled people get treated with respect and get treated in such a way that they know and understand what rights they have and what benefits they're going to receive.

**2000**

They also want our government to make sure that when we amend welfare, we make sure there is an emphasis on workfare, and I can say, in the area that I represent, the workfare scheme, the numbers are not growing very quickly, but they are growing slowly and they are growing month by month, and the municipal people that are working on it are committed to it. They think it's a good scheme, and I know they're going to take it with enthusiasm when they get it under the new Who Does What process and they're going to run with workfare. I'm quite enthusiastic about it and I know the people in my riding are enthusiastic about it as well.

This is not a bill that relates to the banks. The member for Welland-Thorold says, "Make the banks pay." I think there's more to it than that. We have to take a closer look at welfare and we have to make sure that the disability legislation is separate from that.

**Mr Crozier:** I want to suggest that the member for Welland-Thorold, when he spoke to specific parts of the bill, certainly understands it and I think was able to translate his feeling about the bill. He did mention the bill as being a fraud. I wouldn't necessarily go as far as that, except to say it's not unusual for any piece of legislation that comes to this House to not be perfect in everybody's mind. I think that's part of the reason we're given the opportunity to debate the issues and the concerns that we have around a bill like this.

When the word "fraud" is mentioned, I would like to say that there isn't anybody in this Legislature, anybody in this province, save a few, who doesn't want to eliminate all forms of fraud, whether it be in the welfare system, whether it be in the workplace, whether it be in our financial district. It might interest you, to put it in a little context, that we are concerned about fraud in the welfare system. We spend, give or take a few dollars, $6 billion to $7 billion a year in all welfare and family benefits, but this year in Canada workplace fraud will amount to $20 billion, almost three times or maybe more than three times the total welfare bill for the province.

I think where some of our energy can be spent is not only in fighting fraud in welfare but in fighting fraud in the workplace, where many of the workers of this province defraud their employer.

**Mr Martin:** I also want to go on record as commending the member for Welland-Thorold for his always insightful and compassionate comments concerning those in our communities who are most at risk, most vulnerable and most under attack by this particular government that we have here in Ontario today.

I think he does something in his speeches from time to time that's important for all of us to do, and that's to look at the broader and the wider context, the framework within which a piece of legislation fits, and what it is that this government is wanting to do overall with its agenda. He, in his own words, says, very much as my colleague from Algoma says from time to time, that this government believes that the poor have too much and the rich don't have enough. So they're going about doing all in their power to right that wrong.

I don't understand that, the member for Welland-Thorold doesn't understand that, my colleague from Algoma doesn't understand that —

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Not expected to, never will understand that.

**Mr Martin:** But certainly the folks across the way are squealing again here. Every time you touch them on a raw nerve, they start squealing and hollering back here in this place. It reminds me of some of the thinking and reading I've been doing over this past summer. I've been doing a lot of reflecting on a different place and a different time: Ireland, a few years ago, when the famine hit. The government of that day tried to convince the people that they didn't have enough to feed the poor and the unfortunate of that day, even though they had barns full of grain that they were shipping out and selling to the United States and England. They didn't have enough food to feed the poor and the workers of the land of that time.

It's a little bit of déjà vu in Ontario today, and I'll tell you, it'll come back to haunt you.

**Mr Carroll:** I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments on the member for Welland-Thorold's comments relative to Bill 142. His comments on the bill were rather few and far between, but I did glean a couple of small things from them.

First of all, he talks about the group of people from age 60 to 64. If a person is 59 years old in Ontario, they're on the Ontario Works program. I understand the member for Welland-Thorold to suggest that as they move from 59 to 60, we automatically should call them disabled. I know an awful lot of people who are 60 years old, many in this House, and I believe they would resent the member for Welland-Thorold suggesting that because you turn 60 you become disabled. In his final comments he might want to

make some reference to why he feels that would be appropriate.

The other thing that's interesting to note, and I haven't been around here a long time, but I do know that the member for Welland-Thorold was a key member of Bob Rae's government. I know that. I read the newspapers. I know he was a key member of Bob Rae's government, and I do know that in that position he was certainly responsible and supported many of the activities of that government. I really have a hard time dealing with his being critical of our record of job creation when he compares it to the previous five years before we came to power, when in actual fact there was a net loss of jobs in Ontario under the able leadership of Bob Rae.

During that same period of time, hundreds of thousands of people were added to the welfare rolls. The debt tripled to $100 billion. Taxes were raised 35 times. So I really struggle with the member for Welland-Thorold, the key member of the previous government, the NDP government, standing up and being critical of Mike Harris and the Conservative government for their record as far as reducing the welfare rolls by over 200,000 people, creating 125,000 new jobs in the last five months alone.

I think our record stands the test very well against his former government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** The member for Welland-Thorold, two minutes.

**Mr Kormos:** The member for Chatham-Kent was doing fine until his credibility rating dropped considerably among every viewer and every listener. I don't know where he was from 1990 to 1995, but I tell you where the province of Ontario was: Ontario was in the depths of the deepest recession, depression since the Dirty Thirties.

I still have to address the failure of this government to deal with, in my opinion, the irreconcilable fact that the corporate world, the banks, the manufacturing world, the big multinational corporations here in Canada are enjoying record profits, profits of millions and, yes, billions and billions of dollars. Yet the rate of poverty is increasing in this climate where wealth is being created manifold for the corporate world. Human Resources Development Canada said that in June 1997 there were approximately 31,000, slightly less than 31,000 job vacancies here in the city of Toronto, yet there were over 207,000 jobless.

This government is hell-bent on creating a bigger and bigger gap between a smaller and smaller group of very wealthy and a larger and larger group of increasingly poor people, including working people, and ensuring that levels of unemployment persist as part and parcel of their attack on minimum wages, their attack on the trade union movement, their attack on collective bargaining, creating literally a pool of workers that the corporate world, like Bradson, can utilize for scab labour if and when the need motivates them.

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity this evening to speak on this important bill. The Social Assistance Reform Act is a very important bill because it seeks to change the welfare system as we know it, a welfare system that is based on a vicious circle of dependency and a welfare system which has proved ineffective at doing what it is supposed to do, to help those caught in difficult circumstances between one job and another.

In all the speeches I've heard from the other side, I dare say I haven't heard one opposition member say — and you can correct me if I'm wrong — how wonderful and how effective our welfare system is. That's because they know that the system was not working, that it was not helping people move into other jobs and that it was doing little to meet the demands of those persons with a disability. There is no clearer indication of the system's failure than the fact that in just 10 years, between 1985 and 1995, both the Liberal and NDP governments had spent about $40 billion on welfare, resulting in the highest per capita welfare caseload in the country. If ever a government program needed reform, it is our current welfare system.

**2010**

All of the changes cited in this bill are directed at making the welfare system fair, accountable and effective, as all government programs should be. And as the Minister of Community and Social Services has consistently pointed out, fairness, accountability and effectiveness are the underlying principles of this welfare reform package. They are also the principles on which the welfare system was first created.

The Ontario Works Act seeks to bring back the original intent of this system, which was to provide people with an income assistance program of last resort and to help people return to work. The system was not created as an incentive for people to stay on it and to become dependent upon it. In the long run, that has not done recipients any great favours. We all know that people are better off with a job than without a job. Ontario Works gives recognition to this obvious fact. Ontario Works, unlike our current system, will operate on the basis that people will be better off with a job.

The new program will operate very differently from our current program. Most important, it will be mandatory. To be eligible to receive financial assistance, participants must use the employment tools that the program will make available to them. The Ontario Works Act will offer employment assistance in order to help participants move back into the workforce. The act will focus on providing community participation activities that allow participants to acquire the skills, the confidence, the contacts and the opportunities to return to work while contributing to their communities. It will also provide job searches, services to support job searches, referral to basic education, and job-specific skills training and employment placement. These employment assistance tools are crucial to helping persons get a paying job.

So often when people are between jobs, especially if they have had the same job for a long period of time, they feel lost, they feel despondent, they feel as if they don't know how to start looking for another job. They may lack confidence and they may not feel certain as to what options are available to them in their job search. These can be serious problems that can easily be remedied through

the proper employment support system. I believe the mandatory nature of these employment assistance services will go a long way towards alleviating the psychological barriers that some people experience when they are trying to move between one job and another.

Already there are over 36,000 persons participating in one or more of the mandatory Ontario Works activities. We intend to help municipalities increase this number.

The Ontario Works Act also requires that sole-support parents take part in this program when their children are in school. If child care services are needed, they will be provided. The inclusion of sole-support parents in this program is a very important element of this package because single parents on welfare desperately need the supports to help them get a paying job. Single parents may have been out of the workforce for a very lengthy period of time, making their situation seem increasingly difficult. Single parents can benefit greatly from an opportunity to develop their job skills in a community placement, and they can benefit from an opportunity to set goals and objectives and a strategy for their family's future with experienced employment counsellors.

We know that children are better off living in a household where their parent is working than they are living in a household dependent on welfare. We want to help families so that they can take care of themselves. We want to help them get jobs.

For those who doubt our intentions, let's be very clear about the facts. This province is leading the country in job creation. In the last five months alone, the private sector has created some 124,000 net new jobs. Our employment rate is down to 8.2%, the lowest it has been in a very, very long time. It is projected that our economy will continue to grow, creating more jobs for Ontarians in the process. This has been our commitment to the people of Ontario from the start, and that is what we are delivering.

Another element of this package which I believe is important is the introduction of new measures to fight welfare fraud. There's nothing more damaging to the credibility and integrity of such a program than acts of abuse and fraudulence. Welfare fraud hurts those who are in real need of this program and it hurts the taxpayers who are paying for it. Given that the Auditor General has estimated that welfare fraud can cost the government up to $100 million a year, it is imperative that we implement effective measures to minimize this problem. The provisions dealing with fraud in this act, from the information-sharing between ministries, agencies and other levels of government to the use of new identification-verification technologies, will go a long way towards combating welfare fraud.

Just as the Ontario Works Act makes huge strides in reforming an ineffective system, the Ontario Disability Support Program Act takes a giant leap towards a more responsive and progressive way of dealing with persons with disabilities. Bill 142 creates a new and separate program for disabled persons, a separate program that seeks to meet their particular needs and protect their benefits. For the past 30 years, successive governments have placed persons who experience specific physical barriers to normal employment into a welfare system that could not respond to their very particular needs. Moreover, as disabled people had been telling governments over the years, they found the system patronizing and humiliating. It discouraged disabled people from working and it penalized them when their families helped them out. The creation of a separate program designed specifically for disabled people has most definitely been a long time in coming.

The advantages of the Ontario disability support program are, as even the opposition has admitted, numerous. This program no longer classifies people as permanently unemployable, it covers all the different effects of a disability on a person's ability to function, it recognizes the reality that some disabled people have recurrent impairments, and it excludes substance abuse from the category of impairment.

Moreover, this act will protect the benefits of disabled people. Disabled people will be able to benefit more from gifts and inheritances, giving them more security and thus helping them cope better with their disability. It will also allow people with disabilities to keep more of their liquid assets, compensation awards and life insurance. This bill will further get rid of the requirement that disabled people pay 25% of the cost of necessary devices, such as artificial limbs. Disabled people can face huge financial burdens due to the special difficulties they face in their daily activities. The government's role should be to try to alleviate these difficulties, not to aggravate them. With these changes, which are aimed at protecting the benefits of persons with disabilities, our government is doing the right thing in acting to meet the special needs of the disabled.

The progressiveness of this bill is also reflected in the changes directed at making it easier and less worrisome for disabled persons to take on a job. Past governments have created barriers for disabled people who felt as if they would like to try and take on a job. They created a disincentive for them by placing them in a position where they felt they would be jeopardizing their benefits if a job did not work out for them after a certain period of time. Our government wants to break down these barriers. If a person in a wheelchair has the potential of becoming an ace computer programmer, why not support them in their efforts and make it easier for them to achieve their dreams? All disabled persons should have the fundamental freedom to take on a job without worrying about the ramifications should their jobs not work out. That is only fair.

This bill also offers disabled people supports to help them move into the workforce should they choose to do so. Only about 25% of those who use the existing system have jobs when they leave it. We want to make sure we do our best to increase this percentage. We will spend more money on these services, from approximately $18 million today to almost $35 million when these services are fully in place. These services will be based in the community, where they will be delivered more effectively and with less cost. Our government is strongly committed to helping persons with disabilities break down the employment

barriers which they face. With these measures, we are acting on this commitment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gravelle:** I certainly want to have the opportunity to comment on the remarks by the member for Hamilton Mountain. I think once again we are seeing remarks that are in essence prepared by the party people — if the member wants to refute that, that's fine — but there seems to be a certain consistency of pattern here. He doesn't address some of the areas of concern that we have, which I think are really very important.

**2020**

One certainly is the fact that indeed the regulations at this stage are not available for people to look at. It's very difficult when you've got a bill that has the implications of this bill, very difficult indeed, unless you're able to look at the details of the regulations. I think the minister recognizes that and the government members recognize that. They need to be released so they can be looked at, and those need to be dealt with.

I appreciate some of the comments that the member was making in terms of the applications as far as the disability portions are involved, but you have to also accept that the appeal process itself I don't think is fair. The appeal process is not fair in terms of how it relates to those people who are under the Ontario disabilities support program, because they have a very limited right of appeal, which does not seem to be fair at all. We look at the appeal process in general, simply how the Social Assistance Review Board is being changed and the appeal process that will take place afterwards. Again, no appeals will take place under any circumstances, even under OWA, unless there's an internal review that's been done.

There's a real question of trust here, I think is the problem, a question as to whether or not we can expect this government to — as it often does, it has the rhetoric. The words can sound quite nice, and the intent, if you look at the words, can often seem nice. We've seen other pieces of legislation that read the same way. But it's the actions that follow and it's how we see the consultation process that doesn't work. We look at what happens in committee, which gives us great concern right now. We want to see some amendments to this bill and we hope that you'll listen.

**Mr Martin:** I want to also comment on the speech by the member from Hamilton and say this. To listen to him, you would think this government was attempting to help people, that this was their prime goal in this bill. But we know from their track record to date that this is not what they're about.

The first and most fundamental thing you did within a month of being government in this province was to take 22% of the income away from the poorest and the most vulnerable and the most hard-stricken of the citizens who call Ontario home. That was done within a month of you being government. It's akin to a bully walking into a playground and picking out the smallest kid in the park and just pummelling the hell out of him and leaving him there with blood all over his face and then saying to the rest of the people: "That's the tone. Let there be no doubt who's in charge in this place from here on in."

If you really want to do something helpful for people on welfare, I would say revisit the document that was put together back in the early 1980s called the Transitions report, done by Judge Thomson. That was a document that was about this thick. All of us who were out there in those days participating in caring for people participated in putting that together. It was a blueprint that was hailed by everybody in the system at that particular time: by the recipients, by people who deliver services, even by the infamous Conrad Black himself. Why don't you dig that out, take the dust off it and use that as a blueprint?

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the remarks made by my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain.

I enjoyed also the remarks made by the member for Port Arthur where he said the member for Hamilton Mountain's remarks had a consistency or a pattern. You bet your boots they have a consistency or pattern; the member for Hamilton Mountain gave the same speech in this House that he gave in the course of the last general election campaign when he sought the voters' support in Hamilton Mountain. He said one thing before the election and he's saying the exact same thing here today. There is one policy, and that is the commitments that were made during the election campaign. You bet your boots the member for Hamilton Mountain was consistent and showed a pattern.

Our friends in the New Democratic Party, you can respect their opinion: They're against work for welfare. Of course, the Liberal Party campaigned on a platform to do that. This government is following through. So you bet your boots the member for Hamilton Mountain is being consistent.

I certainly appreciate the member's remarks when he spoke about the need to eliminate the barriers for the disabled who would wish to seek employment and to try to encourage those members of the disabled community who would wish to seek employment, to eliminate the barriers in legislation and regulation which might make them concerned that by leaving the social assistance system, their transition back to the system, should that follow, would be in any way in jeopardy. I certainly agreed with the member for Hamilton Mountain there.

He also spoke very eloquently when he said that the more effective way to deliver services is at the local level. I certainly agree. I have a lot of confidence in the delivery of social services at the local level in my part of the province. If it's anything like Hamilton, I would certainly agree.

The importance of welfare reform is very key. If there was one stream of thought through the member's remarks, it was that you don't simply help people by how much money you give them. You help people by creating a climate for job creation, for more hope and more opportunity. We've seen that with the over 200,000 net new jobs that have been created in the province. I know the opposition don't want to hear about the net new jobs,

but it's good news because there's more hope and more opportunity.

**Mr Bisson:** Later I'll get a chance to participate in this debate. For the time being, I just want to respond to the comments from the member for Hamilton Mountain.

I think the member for Sault Ste Marie set it out. This government has demonstrated more times than not, unfortunately for a lot of Ontarians, that when it comes to how you do business in this province, this government has got one mode: When it comes to workers, when it comes to those people who need them, when it comes to those people less fortunate, this government has got a vicious side to it. They're more than prepared to go out and put the boots to people in order to make the point they want to make: that everybody who is down and out, it's their fault. It's not because of the economy. It's not because of unemployment. It's not because of anything other than people choose to be on welfare, people choose to be unemployed, people choose to be in a less fortunate position. This government has decided they want to take a very tough stand against people when they're in that situation.

If they were on the other side, and in fairness to the government, to say that we're preparing and we're going to choose as a government to be equally tough with the people on the other side of the equation who are abusing the system on the corporate side — I heard the Premier when he was first elected as Premier talk about how all of a sudden it was a virtue for corporations not to pay their taxes in this province. Isn't that abuse? Isn't that fraud? This government does nothing about the other side of it. They say it's a virtue for the rich to steal, but when it comes to the poor people who are found to be unemployed and, yes, needing social assistance, we will punish them. I say that is not only wrong, but that is a question of a government —

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe that anyone in this government has ever said it's a virtue to steal. The member is putting words into somebody else's mouth, and I don't think that's proper.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I don't think it's out of order at all. He wasn't referring to anyone.

**Mr Bisson:** I've lost about 30 seconds. Can I have my time back later on for the speech?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Mountain, you have two minutes.

**Mr Pettit:** I'd like to thank the members for Port Arthur, Sault Ste Marie, Nepean and Cochrane South for engaging in the debate tonight. I'm flattered by the comments by the member for Port Arthur, that he would even compare my notes to those that may indeed come from the ministry at times. I'd also like to recognize — it's good to hear that finally the member for Sault Ste Marie has acknowledged that we are a caring and compassionate government. And of course the member for Nepean —

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I do believe the member opposite has to be truthful when he's responding to the comments made by members. If he would have listened —

**The Deputy Speaker:** No. I don't accept that. When you're using the words that he's not truthful, you know what that means. I want you to withdraw that, member for Cochrane South. Would you withdraw it, please.

**Mr Bisson:** Pardon me? Withdraw what, Speaker? I didn't hear you. Sorry.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are you withdrawing the word?

**Mr Bisson:** I'll withdraw it. Sure.

**Mr Pettit:** Of course, the member for Nepean spoke as eloquently as always, but I didn't hear one single argument from the other side that would cause me to change my support for this bill. In 1995, we promised the people of Ontario that we would reform the welfare system —

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I listened very carefully to the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie. I think it is incorrect to attribute to him comments such as "compassionate government." He never said that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The decision was rendered and there's no more room for debating. The member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Mr Pettit:** I've lost quite a bit of time there, so in closing, I just want to say that it's very unfortunate that the previous governments didn't have the will to make the necessary reforms to these programs. I'm pleased and proud to be part of a government that has shown such a commitment to helping people fulfil their potential.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**2030**

**Mr Gravelle:** I'm glad to have an opportunity to join the debate, even though we have now entered the portion where only 10 minutes per speaker are allowed, which of course is a reality of the rule changes in this province of Ontario.

There are various aspects of this bill that I want to have an opportunity to discuss, but it's probably fair to begin with the fact that what this government does not seem particularly to understand very well is that there simply is no trust left in this government by the groups they say this bill is for.

They have proven themselves from the very beginning by absolutely attacking the very groups they say in their rhetoric they want to help. We know that the first action taken by this government, in July 1995, was to cut social assistance benefits by 21.6%. It was the first attack on people on social assistance and it began a process that was going to really –

**Mr Baird:** You promised to do that.

**Mr Gravelle:** We certainly had no intention of doing that, and you know we didn't. The member for Nepean shouldn't be interrupting my speech in that manner.

**Mr Baird:** You promised to do it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Nepean.

**Mr Gravelle:** The fact is, that's what began this process, and this government has continued in this fashion by attacking the most vulnerable people. We know they've attacked seniors in a variety of fashions. I could certainly go on for my full 10 minutes outlining the ways in which they've gone after the seniors in our province. We see an

aspect of that in Bill 142. We see that seniors aged 60 to 64 will be put under the Ontario Works program. They are being told they must be out there providing community work in order to get their benefits.

This is a remarkable insult to the people of this province of that age group who have worked hard and done their very best in our society. If they find themselves in those circumstances, to put them in that program when they previously were not in it and were left out of the previous cuts this ministry made two years ago is a clearly hardhearted approach. To take that group and make it one more attack on the seniors in our province is absolutely unconscionable.

But the point is that there is a loss of trust that's going on out there among the groups that the members in the government side believe this bill speaks to. That's why, when I was speaking about the member for Hamilton Mountain's consistency — it wasn't his specifically; it was the government members' consistency in terms of their speeches, their speeches on this bill this week and on 136 last week. There is a quality to them of, "This is the government line, and we are going to spit out that government line come heck or high water."

We know that the groups concerned about it, groups in my community of Thunder Bay — I can certainly list off the groups: the Lakehead Social Planning Council, People Advocating for Change through Empowerment, the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty, the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic, the Faye Peterson Transition House, a number of groups. A whole number of groups in my community truly are banding together because of their fear of what this bill will ultimately end up doing to those people who are most vulnerable. Again, it comes down to a question of trust. They simply don't believe this government's intentions are to help those people.

We listened to the government members present their speeches and we listened to the minister present her responses, but the actions aren't there. The regulations themselves, the most important aspect of this bill, have not yet been released to the public for scrutiny. We need to see those. We've called upon the minister to release those regulations so they can be looked at.

Clearly, until one can see how the bill applies in regulation form, it's extremely difficult to ascertain exactly what the true meaning of the bill is going to be. We can't seem to have that being brought forward. That is a strange attitude for a government that says, "We want to have open and honest debate about this issue." How can you have open and honest debate if you don't have all the facts at hand? We call upon the government to do that. We've done that from the very beginning and will continue to do so.

The other aspect that really is important is that aspect of consultation. It's something that has bothered me consistently throughout the last couple of years, maybe more so in the last year, that public hearings and committee hearings themselves truly do not seem to represent what the government members and the government say they are. We expect consultation to take place. We expect legitimate amendments to come forward from all three parties. We expect the government to listen. There hasn't been a real show of that with any of the bills that have been put forward for public hearings.

I call on the government to listen to those, to look for those amendments. I could name the number of bills that have come forward where we have not seen any substantive amendments, certainly no amendments that reflect what was heard at the public hearings from the public at large. That's pretty frustrating to the public as well, because they're going forward with the best intentions, looking at the bill and saying, "These are the changes that need to take place," and those amendments aren't going forward.

I've had experiences on committee where the government members themselves have indicated that they would like to go forward with some of the amendments, "But this is not the appropriate time to do it" is the best answer we get, and of course that's not very acceptable.

The fact is that there are concerns about this bill. Various groups in my constituency have come to me and have talked to me about it and have asked me to put forward some of those concerns. I want to use part of my time today to express some of those concerns directly from the groups themselves. I certainly made reference to the clearly bad decision being made in terms of putting seniors from 60 to 64 under the Ontario Works program. It's clear that the government needs to look at that. It truly is hardhearted.

In terms of how those people on disability are affected, Persons United for Self-Help in northwestern Ontario, PUSH Northwest, an organization I work very closely with and an organization that works closely with the disabled community in northwestern Ontario, has a number of very specific concerns they've asked me to put forward. I want to refer to a letter they've sent me. I hope these go on the record and are listened to and are considered as changes. Speaker, you earlier spoke very eloquently on the bill and addressed a number of these concerns as well. I think it's important to have them brought forward.

One of the concerns they have is that too many provisions are left to regulations, which are not subject to hearings, and may be passed before they know the full impact of a law. That is a great concern.

That definitions also can be as restrictive as the person interpreting them is a concern the members of PUSH Northwest have. Definitions, for example, for eligibility can be narrowed without any legislative change. This is a concern. The ministry can appoint assessors who take a very restrictive view of who is disabled, which brings us to the whole question of the definition of "disability" and taking away the concept of permanent unemployability. Redefining "disability" is limiting the terms to a degree that a lot of people are very concerned that those people who are legitimately disabled will no longer qualify for the benefits they should receive under disability. That is a great concern and we need to deal with it.

Another issue is the appeals process, a great concern to a number of individuals and groups. Every case will have

to go through an internal review before being appealed to the Social Benefits Tribunal. This can be used to delay cases unfairly, and also there is no provision for interim assistance during an internal review, again an area of great concern. Once the internal review is completed, the applicant or recipient may appeal a negative decision to the tribunal. At this stage interim assistance can be applied for, but if the appeal is unsuccessful, the interim assistance paid out will be considered an overpayment, which may be recovered by the government through any means necessary.

It has become accepted practice to fingerprint social assistance recipients and use any other technologies to identify recipients. Currently, the only people who are required to be fingerprinted are those who are being charged with a crime. Is this an assumption that people who receive social assistance are criminals? This is an issue that came up some time ago when I think the Premier mused that perhaps everybody should be fingerprinted. They can call it "finger scanning" or anything else they want. The fact is that the people of this province wonder why this is necessary when there's no particular added benefit to having it done, in terms of identification, in terms of identifying fraud.

There are a number of other concerns about benefits that will not be covered under 142 which I want to address at least very quickly. Assistance with homemaking, which was once provided under vocational rehabilitation, is no longer covered under the bill. The training allowance is gone in the new system. Funding for employment supports is limited to a certain amount annually, which covers technological aids and interpretative services, but this amount will not meet the needs of all people with disabilities who require the assistance.

**2040**

There will be no exceptions to overpayment recovery, even when the overpayment is the result of administrative error on the part of the government. We've seen this happen before as well. I think it's only fair to recognize that people in a position where they are receiving an amount of money from the government expect that the amount of money they're being granted is exactly the amount the government says they're going to get. I've had people come into my constituency office who have had an overpayment, through administrative error which is no fault of their own, and we've seen some of the harshness that's happened afterwards as a result of trying to gather it back.

I'm running out of time. There are other issues I wanted to deal with but can't. There are changes that need to be made to this legislation, changes that should be done through the public hearing process. I hope the cynicism I'm developing about the public hearing process is misplaced and that there will be an opportunity at the public hearing process all across the province to make some of those changes and some of those amendments which I hope the government will agree with.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Kormos:** Witness the Tory rule changes: a debate wherein a member is denied the opportunity to speak to the issue and is restricted to a mere 10 minutes, as my colleagues in the New Democratic Party will be for the balance of this so-called debate. That's exactly what the Tories want to achieve. They want to avoid the debate. They want to avoid, in this instance, the relevant debate, which is the debate about poverty in Ontario, the debate about joblessness, the debate about huge corporate profits being accompanied by increased job losses. That's what the issue is all about.

If we're going to talk about welfare and welfare reform, surely we should be talking about who is poor, why they are poor and why it is that such tremendous wealth is being generated in this province while the numbers of people and families and kids and seniors are being relegated to poverty and the despair and hopelessness that accompany it; kids whose futures are being short-circuited by being compelled to grow up in the devastating impact of poverty.

That's the debate that should be being held. That's the debate that's being short-circuited and curtailed by this government. That's the debate that this government would avoid and will avoid like the plague. That's what their rule changes are all about. That's why they're refusing to talk about what their so-called jobs really are: part-time, temporary and minimum or sub-minimum wage. That's why they are refusing to talk about increased wealth in this province being accompanied by increased levels of unemployment. That's why they are unwilling to talk about their phoney tax break being paid for by the poor and working and sick and students, two thirds of which is going to go to the top 10% of income earners.

**Mr Clement:** I join the debate to talk about some of the remarks from the member for Port Arthur. One thing he raised in particular was the issue of the regulations. While we all want to see regulations in place that would shed some light on this area as soon as possible, we also want to make sure it's done right.

I publicly at this time commend the minister and her ministry for the amount of consultation she has already accomplished in the area, particularly in the area of the Ontario disability support program. She has consulted with over 100 groups that represent persons with various disabilities on issues such as assets and gifts and trusts and assistive devices programs.

Other aspects of that particular bill have already been consulted on. We are entering the legislative committee phase of this process, and people who are watching should know that at that time there is an opportunity for the government and the opposition to get more advice on how we should engage in implementing the provisions of the legislation so that we do it right. That is the time when we can get even more input and make sure the regulations are done right.

I'd be remiss if I didn't say parenthetically at this time, in response to both the member for Port Arthur and the member for Welland-Thorold, that we all want to assist those who are in a situation where they need some help over a temporary period, but the system in place now is one where people are trapped within the system. They

want to get out of the system as much as we want to get them out of the system and become involved in creative and opportune ways in our economy, but they can't get out because the system we have in place right now ensures that they stay there month after month, year after year. I don't know what else we can call that except an immoral, unjust system. We are doing everything we can on behalf of welfare recipients to change that system as soon as possible.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I want to begin my two minutes by sharing the regret we all have on this side of the House that my colleague, who came here tonight to participate in this debate with a great many concerns, concerns he holds because he has talked to people in both our ridings, back in Thunder Bay, about their concerns with this legislation and what this government is actually doing to people — he's a member who listened and who wanted the government to hear the kinds of concerns we hear out in our constituency — was able to have only 10 minutes in which to even begin to address the concerns he brings into the House tonight. I think that is one of the clear, unfair, unequal results of the rule changes this government has brought in.

My colleague from Port Arthur has done what the minister and the government failed to do. The member suggests that the minister consulted with a great many disabled groups. Unfortunately, the minister did not deal with the key concern of the disabled groups, and that's what my colleague from Port Arthur was pointing out. She failed to deal with their concern around the whole definition of "disabled" and who is going to be considered to be employable.

I'm sure if my colleague had had more time, he would have spoken eloquently about the concerns he has for the psychiatrically disabled in our community and how they are going to be affected by the definition of "disabled." Are they considered to be functional? Can they hold down that job under an Ontario Works environment? I think my colleague would have wanted a chance to share his concerns specifically about those individuals.

I know my colleague would want to share concerns, as I would, about our disbelief that the government failed to hear that the seniors from 60 to 65 should not be included in this legislation. A representative spokesperson for the ministry said within the last couple of days: "We didn't make the change because, after all, it reflects the current work situation. Most people between the ages of 60 and 65 are indeed working." Of course they are, but there are very good reasons why many aren't. One of the reasons in the current work situation is that they've been laid off. They don't deserve to be punished. They are also trying to find productive volunteer work and that should be acknowledged and recognized.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm delighted to have a chance to respond to the member for Port Arthur. A lot of what he said, particularly about the Ontario Works Act, that part of the bill, I agree with completely. I think he brings very real concerns from his constituents and they are shared by my constituents.

I don't direct this at him, because he was elected in the last election so he can't be responsible for what his party's record was on this. But I find it passing strange that they can be critical of the government, which I am, for the way in which they've slashed welfare benefits and put in a workfare program, when I read from the Liberal campaign document, "Those who refuse to participate in the program," and this is essentially mandatory opportunity, "will receive only a basic allowance that is set at the national average and is less than the current Ontario allowance." That ain't a lot different from what we see here and what we hear being criticized.

I take the comments from the member for Port Arthur genuinely in terms of his constituents and his representation and the way he feels about this. I need to say to the government that I agree with him in terms of how wrongheaded this is. Your Ontario Works program is not working. Your workfare program is not putting people back to meaningful work or giving them meaningful skills. There needs to be a discussion in this province about poverty, about the need to expand the economy and create jobs so that people have real opportunities. Instead, we see a government that has brought together a bill which deals with disability income support.

In fact, there are some meritorious parts to it — it needs changes — but they've slammed that together with an untenable piece of legislation around Ontario Works and they've not allowed members of the Legislature to have a full debate on both pieces of very separate legislation. It's a wrongheaded move, both in terms of democracy and also in terms of the Ontario Works Act, the way in which it deals with people in poverty. They should not be penalized. They should be helped to find a job. You should be focusing on job creation, not on penalizing the poor.

**Mr Gravelle:** I want to thank my colleagues from Welland-Thorold, Brampton South, Fort William and Beaches-Woodbine for their comments. One of the things I'm proudest of —

**Mr Bradley:** Don't mention the social contract.

**2050**

**Mr Gravelle:** No, I won't mention the social contract. I promised I wouldn't.

One of the things I'm proudest about in being a member of the Liberal Party and the caucus is that I am encouraged to express my feelings about issues such as this, the fact that we care so much about vulnerable people, the fact that we worry so much about a government over there that seems to care so little, a government that puts forward a bill like 142, like 136, a bill that literally is going to hurt people — it's going to hurt the disabled, it's going to hurt seniors from 60 to 65. Those are whom we want to focus on. I'm proud that I belong to a party and a caucus that support me in my battle, as we support all our colleagues here.

It's very clear: This is a badly flawed bill for a variety of reasons. I think the minister, who is here tonight — and I appreciate that — in listening to all our remarks recognizes there are some changes that need to be made. I hope

she will use this opportunity tonight to think in terms of some of the amendments that need to be made to have this bill, if not withdrawn in a large fashion, changed so that it is more fair. The whole essence of the relationship in terms of those people who are disabled is scary to a large number of those people. When you redefine the term in more narrow terms, for good reasons a lot of groups that advocate for the disabled community, and the disabled community itself, have reasons to be concerned.

I am proud to stand here and fight for the issues that matter to me, to fight for the people in my community who matter to me. I've done it from the moment I got elected in 1995 and I will continue to do so with the full support of my colleagues on this side of the House.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I want to start by voicing my strong objection to the fact that I only have 10 minutes to speak tonight. I believe this place is becoming more and more irrelevant. What the opposition has to say on any of these bills that are being rushed through, that have huge impacts on people —

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Rushed?

**Ms Churley:** Yes, rushed, to the Minister of Community and Social Services. We have very little time to respond. I hear members over there complaining all the time that we, the opposition, don't talk enough to the clauses, yet they limit our time to speak.

This is an area where I have a great deal of interest in and concern about what is happening. Because of the limited time tonight I'm grateful that my colleagues, particularly the members for Beaches-Woodbine and London Centre, have been able to talk at great length about the disabilities part of this. I tend to agree with their position on that, with some amendments, which I hope the government is paying attention to.

Speaker, if I may say so now that I'm not in the chair, I enjoyed your speech and I think you and others gave some very good critiques of some of the problems with that part of the bill. I hope the minister — I'm very glad to see that she is here tonight and paying attention — will take into account with goodwill some of the very positive suggestions that have been made by both opposition parties after consulting with people from the disabled community, who generally support what you're doing. But there are some concerns, and yes, some real fears. I hope some of those amendments can be made.

I want to talk specifically about the other part of the bill. May I say to the minister that I really would like to see them separated out. I have very, very strong objections to the other part of the bill: the changes in the welfare laws. If the right amendments are made, I would like to be able to support wholeheartedly the changes to the disabled aspect. If this is not separated out, I will not have the opportunity to do that, which is a real problem. I have many objections to the other part of the bill, and I'm going to, in the few minutes I have, outline what some of those are.

First of all they should be separated. I'm very concerned that a lot of the provisions are left to regulations. I think there should be full public hearings so that people are aware of what you're thinking about. The minister did perhaps, from my understanding and knowledge of what happened, talk to some people on social assistance. I'm glad to hear she did that, but what I'm disturbed about is that I don't believe the minister listened particularly to the people who are going to be affected by this bill. That's why we have to demand that there are public hearings.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Of course there will be public hearings.

**Ms Churley:** The minister says, "Of course there will be public hearings." This is good news because I want to make sure they're held all over the province and that welfare recipients are treated with the same respect and given the same dignity as doctors of this province.

I'm afraid what often happens with welfare recipients is that they become the whipping-boy. During the election there was a big — and Mike Harris ran on it — "Let's get those welfare recipients. Let's get these people who are ripping off the taxpayers." So the first thing the government did was cut welfare by 23%. I don't know if they were thinking at the time, beyond their campaign promise, how many children were affected adversely by that cut and who are now lining up at food banks, who just started school today.

My colleague from Beaches-Woodbine, who is our critic for children's issues, has been talking repeatedly about child care issues and about poverty. So far, we have not moved forward. That's really what this debate should be about.

Apart from a general improvement in the economy which creates more jobs, we know now there are more people looking for work than there are jobs available. We have to look at that and accept it and start being creative and showing some leadership in how we are going to deal with that, because the whole work situation with the global economy has changed, is changing, and a lot of people are being left behind. That's a reality that this bill, I think the minister would agree, is not going to fix. It can fix some of the other problems but it's not going to find jobs for everybody and a lot of people are going to end up in part-time and dead-end jobs.

People on social assistance said they want to focus on general education upgrading and skills training in either a new occupation or their present occupation. Assistance with job-search skills such as looking for work more effectively, assistance with résumé preparation and making contacts and networking were not considered priorities by the recipients, yet what do we see here? The focus of Ontario Works is identifying the shortest route to paid employment, but the focus is not one which will lead to a better job.

Under the employment support program stream, participants can be assigned to one of structured or self-directed job searches, a program of basic education or short-term specific skills training. Get this: The program guidelines specifically forbid in-depth career assessments or in-depth career counselling. So the orientation, it seems to me, is heavily biased towards simple job readiness

programs and job-search assistance and away from any kind of genuine skills training.

I can't cover all the issues I wanted to talk about. I'm also very concerned about a possibility that the OWA and the ODSPA will allow the government to require that applicants, recipients and their dependants, as a condition of receiving social assistance, have to agree to assign future income back to the Ontario government. That is very alarming to me.

There may be circumstances where that makes sense. I don't know exactly whom you have in mind here, Minister, but you that you can lead people in a vicious circle if you do that. I'm not expecting to see a lot of people on social assistance, given the mandate of this, going into high-paying jobs.

When people come off social assistance and get back in the workforce, they're not going to make a fortune. They could end up in this vicious downward spiral where they're finally earning, more than likely, minimum wage, possibly part-time, having to spend almost all of it in paying back over a number of years assistance they got when they were really in need and ending up at the food bank again. I don't think that's the purpose of this bill. I would like some assurance that is not going to happen.

I'm concerned about the lack of attention to child care. There are a lot of single parents who I know — I think we would all agree that most people who are able to work want to work. What I don't like about this bill and the way you approached it in the election campaign, during a very bad recession, is that it preyed on people's fears and prejudices. It gives the impression that there are a lot of lazy bums out there who don't want to work. "First of all, we'll cut their cheques, and then we'll bring in a punitive bill to make sure they get back to work." But it doesn't give them the supports they need to get into the job force in a serious way that will give them the kind of income they can support their children on. That's the problem with this.

I've been paying some attention, as I expect the minister probably is, to what's happening in the US with various kinds of welfare reform there. The states where it seems to be most successful are those which are actually paying out more money than they used to pay in welfare recipients benefits, because they're using that money to put the supports in place: the child care, the job training, the travel vouchers, the medicare.

All those things that people desperately need, those supports, have to be there; otherwise this is a dead-end game. I fear that's what's being played here. There was a promise made, "We're going to get these welfare bums and we're going to get them off welfare and we're going to catch all these people who are cheating the system." Well, folks, this is not going to solve the problem at all. I hope the minister will go out and have hearings and consider these points.

**2100**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Carroll:** I appreciate the comments of the member for Riverdale. She said that most people who are able to work, in her opinion, want to work, and I don't think any of us disagree with that. I struggle, though, with her perception of dead-end jobs and part-time jobs. There are a lot of part-time jobs, and people who are on Ontario Works will be allowed to earn some money to supplement their income, but I don't think there are any dead-end jobs. I was an employer and I didn't have any dead-end jobs, because good performance at one job always leads to another job. I kind of resent the classification of "dead-end jobs." I believe any job is a good job.

To be trapped in the welfare system, as over one million people were in this province in the last 10 years — there's an absolute guarantee that you will never, ever break the cycle of poverty. The only way out of that cycle, bar winning a lottery, is a job. If we as a government do not have the conscience to make sure we do everything we possibly can for those people who, in the member for Riverdale's eyes, are able to work and want to work, if we don't do everything we can to provide them with an opportunity to learn how to work and be productive members of our labour force, we are condemning them to a life of poverty.

That I think is the ultimate tragedy of the last 10 years in government, that we've said to those people, "We will continue to pay you benefits, we will continue to keep you trapped in the system, keep your children trapped in the system." That is the tragedy. Our program to encourage people to go to work, to get some training, become productive members of society, is the only way out of the cycle of poverty. That is a sign of good, compassionate government.

**Mr Bradley:** I found the speech most interesting, if brief. I know the member wanted to go into great detail on some portions of the bill which have great ramifications.

I'm surprised the member for Beaches-Woodbine, Frances Lankin, fell into the trap of accepting material from John Baird, the Conservative member who wants to please the Premier so he brings the item over to Frances to use today. I was at the Labour Day parade and I did not mention the social contract once. I did not mention the abrogation of every public service contract in Ontario once. I assure the member of that, even though I was with the brothers and sisters who would be receptive to that.

But to look at the provisions of this bill, I hope that the committee hearings, particularly on this bill, are meaningful and that the minister listens and the government listens. There are certain parts of it we have some concerns with. One is, what do you do with the people between the ages of 60 and 65? Some people will be able to work very well in that group, others will have a really difficult time healthwise, or being out of the workforce for a while, or simply because of personal circumstances; also people on disabilities, the definition of "disability." That will have to be done very carefully to ensure that people who have genuine disabilities are not excluded from assistance. As I mentioned before, I think of the ex-psychiatric patients in the province, many of whom simply cannot be employed because employers will not take them

on their payroll and into their workplace and that's most unfortunate.

When you combine this with the ending of rent controls, with the reduction of support for public transit, with user fees which are increasing tremendously, this may well have an impact that the government didn't anticipate and really doesn't want.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm pleased to respond just in passing and say that the member for St Catharines should also always remember who gets the last word on these rotations. I genuinely would say to him that there are times when you're pointing out exactly what you disagree with the government on and it's hard sitting here to hear the official opposition stand up and say the same things you are saying, when in the past they said something exactly opposite. I think the one point I would agree with him on is that this is now the government and this is the government that has the responsibility, and the bill they're bringing in is problematic.

I just want to indicate what a pity it is, with these rule changes, that the member for Riverdale only had the 10 minutes to speak. I remember during the years of government, in cabinet, what a fierce advocate the member for Riverdale was, and still is, on behalf of the poverty community. In attempting to ensure that changes in social assistance and redirection of programs, when we looked at establishing the child benefit program, and separating them out, and disability programs, separating them out, her focus was always on what it would mean for families in poverty, families caught in the cycle, and would it help or would it hurt. Her representations to the government on a number of specifics of this bill would have been very helpful.

It really does speak to what has happened with respect to debate. I was in a committee earlier today when we were involved in public hearings on a very short bill and it was very clear that the reason the bill is so short is that there is no detail in it, that everything is left to regulation. It is much the same here. The thorny issues, the tough issues are what we as legislators have a responsibility to be debating and determining, not just hitting hot-button politics, satisfying that kind of guttural need and leaving the detail to cabinet. That's a real problem and that's what we've got here.

**Mr Klees:** I'm pleased to make some comments on the member for Riverdale's speech. Ten minutes: perhaps short, but certainly very succinct and to the point, and I know the member is very sincere in her concern for the disadvantaged in the province.

I think as we listen to the debate, this speech and others preceding it, one of the things that is very clear is that all members of this House care for those who are disadvantaged, and that what we want to do is the right thing. This bill is now at second reading stage. We're looking forward to taking this bill into committee. We're looking forward to further consultation. Clearly, there are some areas of this bill that require some additional study. We look forward to the member's continued support for the principle of the bill. We look forward to her advice on some of the details in terms of implementation, the various issues that still need to be addressed. As we have said in debate, a number of the implementation issues will be dealt with in regulation. We look forward to the committee process to get input from members of the House, from members of the public to assist us with that.

At the end of the day, the principle we want to assure the people of this province of is that this government cares for those who are disadvantaged. This bill is designed to help those who need the help most. What we want to do is stop wasting taxpayers' dollars. We want to start to focus it on the needs of the people who really need the help, and through this bill, through the consultation process, I'm sure we'll achieve that.

**2110**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Riverdale has two minutes to respond.

**Ms Churley:** I would like to say to the member for Chatham-Kent directly that you're not providing jobs through this bill. When you talk about dead-end jobs, it's very easy for us to sit here in our nice suits and ties and say: "A job is a job. Any job will do." People have to start somewhere, but I said when I spoke that people need support and training and child care and medical help; all these supports have to be in place. If you look at what's happening in the United States to some people in these dead-end jobs, it doesn't work. The kids suffer and they're going to end up in the same spiral. It doesn't work.

To the member for St Catharines, what can I say? The exchange was mostly between him and the member for Beaches-Woodbine. Of course I was happy to see that he didn't mention the social contract all night.

To the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I would say the same thing. But she did take some time to talk about the fact — and she's quite right — that when we were in cabinet I was a strong advocate for people on welfare and for poor people. I still remain so, I suppose — to get personal for a moment — because I was there myself once and I can speak from experience. I think that can make a difference.

To the member for York-Mackenzie, I think you're badly misguided in terms of what you think you're going to be able to do to make changes to this bill. Your government consults and doesn't listen, and guess who's going to make the real decisions around this bill? It's going to be done around the cabinet table, I expect a very small portion of that cabinet table. So you're not going to have any say and neither will the public. That's the unfortunate truth about this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** I'm pleased today to rise and join the debate on Bill 142, the Social Assistance Reform Act, which as everyone knows creates two statutes, one being the Ontario Works Act and the other being the Ontario Disability Support Program Act.

During 1995, as you know, we campaigned on a promise to reform welfare, and the Ontario Works Act does just that. We also spoke about ensuring that people with dis-

abilities were protected, and the Ontario disability support program does just that.

I want to tell you that last Friday I visited the Ontario Works office in my area and what I saw there was truly impressive. When you walk in the office, first of all, what you see is a job board, which I thought was terrific, because it had all kinds of jobs there, from clerical jobs to warehousing jobs — all kinds of jobs. But as you walked into the office, there were computers, and everybody was sitting working on computers, typing up résumés, writing letters, going into offices using telephones, phoning employers, getting help with interview skills. The whole office was focused on employment and income maintenance. I was truly impressed.

What you saw there was a group of people, client service reps, who were dedicated and committed to working with people, to helping them better their lives and get off a system that they don't want to be on in the first place. To the people in that Hamilton office, I commend them for their friendly, committed attitude to helping people.

I wanted to focus today on the appeal process of the Ontario Works Act. The member for Windsor-Sandwich has stated often in this House that the bill is unfair, that there is no right of appeal in Bill 142. I just wanted to reassure her that in fact the appeal process is there. The appeal process has been streamlined.

**Ms Lankin:** It's not the same.

**Mrs Ross:** That's right. It's not the same, and thank God it's not the same. I'll tell you why. I have these statistics from SARB, from April to June of this year, three months. In three months, 26% of the appeals that went there were denied because the appellant didn't show. What does that indicate? Probably that they didn't have a legitimate complaint. Another 11% were dismissed, and the reason they were dismissed was because the matter was withdrawn or resolved; in 29% the appeal was denied. It goes to show you that 33% of the appeals that went were items that could have been dealt with in an internal review and could have saved those people from going through the agony of that appeal process.

The initiatives of the appeal process bring the clients to a faster appeal through a more streamlined process. The first step is the internal review, where they look at the reasons for why they're appealing the process and resolve it at the first step. The second step, if they can't resolve it then, is that it then goes to the appeal process, through the Social Benefits Tribunal.

The other thing is that the member for Windsor-Sandwich said, on Tuesday, August 19, "We used to allow people to receive interim assistance while they were appealing," and she claims that if the appeal was unsuccessful the welfare system would reclaim that and recover that money. What happens during those months and months while that's happening?

I'll tell you what happens: Those people who are going through the appeal process are provided with financial assistance if they need it. It's the very same as what it used to be. If it ends up, at the end of the appeal process, that they have been overpaid, they will repay that, similar to what they did before.

I just want to make sure that the public out there is aware that the right of appeal does still exist, that it's been fast-tracked, that there's an internal process, that a decision will be made within a matter of days as opposed to what currently happens, where the appeal process averages about 6.9 months.

I think that anything you can do to move things along, to get people out working, to get them off social assistance, to help them make their lives better, is a step in the right direction. So I'm standing today in support of Bill 142. I look forward to the hearings, to the input we'll hear at that time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I was very pleased to hear the comments from the member from Hamilton. I ask the Conservative members in this House if they have ever before today been at their local welfare office. Does the member from Hamilton realize how long a job board has been up at the welfare office? Do you realize that this stuff didn't just happen since you took office? Governments for years and years have been linking the people who collect assistance to the job market. Do you recognize that the current procedure to be able to collect welfare includes having to be out looking for work? It includes being in an education or training program.

These are the things that have always been under consideration. You have led the public by the nose to believe that anyone could just walk in and get on the welfare roll. That has not been the case for years. If this government over the last two years has allowed others to be fraudulent about this system, that's because once again this government is painting the picture as though you're some kind of fabulous manager when in fact you, as a Conservative government, have not led the crackdown on fraud. Everyone in this House would agree that no fraud is acceptable in a welfare system, but you have taken punitive measures against people who truly need help and made it extraordinarily difficult.

You have not once addressed the fact that the most significant barrier to employment, mostly for women, is child care. This is the same government that put $40 million in the budget but, when you had got to the end of your fiscal year, hadn't spent a dime of it. Then you had the gall to say, "Well, we're going to put it in next year's budget." All those dollars that weren't spent on child care that actually acted as a barrier and kept women in the system longer — your doing, no one else's.

**2120**

**Ms Churley:** I recall that in an earlier speech, the member for St Catharines complained that the member for York-Mackenzie, I believe it was, was reading a speech that appeared to be written by bureaucrats. With all due respect, I think we would have preferred in this case a speech written by the bureaucrats, because at least they know what the system is all about, for heaven's sake. The member for Hamilton West, although I'm sure very well

meaning, does not understand what's going on today, what's been going on for five years, 10 years.

The welfare system, by the way, didn't just start as we know it today, that 10 lost years which the government members like to relate to. It was around before that; yes, when the Tories were there 10 years ago too. They played a part too. It has been constantly changed and updated. You didn't start a process of getting people and assisting people and in fact requiring people to look for jobs. That's been a part of the system for a long time.

Our government, even though I know your party at the time objected to Jobs Ontario, although it was a new program — and yes, there were glitches, but it was a program that I believe should have been expanded because it wasn't punitive, it was another step forward in terms of giving people meaningful work, meaningful training, helping the small businesses, on the whole — there were some big but some small businesses — in terms of training them. A huge number, I think it was 80% or 90%, of jobs were retained through that system.

Child care, which this present government cancelled, was attached to that program. That's all gone now. But if the member would take the time to look, at least have some kind of awareness of what's in the system now, then we might be hearing a little bit and getting a little bit more information about what she believes is right about this system compared to the systems before.

**Mr Bradley:** It's always interesting to hear the comments of the government members as they support legislation. It is our role as the opposition, of course, to point out areas where we feel the bill can be improved or the legislation is not as it should be; not always to oppose but to give some constructive thoughts about it.

I am concerned because I see that there have been some cuts which have affected people who are in unfortunate circumstances, so it puts people in a vulnerable position. Even the working poor are placed in a vulnerable position. For instance, literacy programs I think are very helpful. It's amazing the number of people who have problems with literacy.

When I first came into this Legislature I was given the role that most new members are as the critic for correctional services. I remember touring several of the prisons in the province with the Honourable Gordon Walker, who was then the Minister of Correctional Services. One of the things I noted was that many of the people who are in the prison system were very deficient in terms of educational and employable skills, and that's why many of them ended up where they did. The only job that they ended up being able to do was a job that was against the law, and that was not acceptable. Literacy training is extremely important. We've seen cuts there.

We've seen cuts in child care, and obviously if you're going to have working parents involved, we'll need some funds for child care additional to what the government has proposed. We've seen some cuts in adult education, adult education being very important to help people to be able to market themselves within the work system. We've seen increased fees for tuition at colleges and universities, once again in places where people could upgrade themselves.

**Mr Bisson:** It's interesting that I get an opportunity to comment on the member for Hamilton West's speech since none of the Tories got up to comment on her speech, which I think is kind of interesting, but I won't delve into that.

Her speech best describes and exemplifies where this government is at with a whole bunch of issues. They're trying to make a number of changes, in this case in the welfare system, on an ideological principle, not understanding how the system really works and what the practicality is.

The member stands up here and tries to make people in this Legislature believe and tries to make the people of Ontario believe that there have never been any changes to the welfare system over the last 50 years. It's like somebody all of a sudden invented welfare back in the 1940s and 1950s and he left it there and nothing ever happened and it just stayed the way it was, and finally, thank God, Mike Harris came around and now we're able to do something about it.

The reality is that every government, from the Bill Davis government to the David Peterson to the Bob Rae government, made a number of changes to the social assistance system to deal with what was happening in the economy. In our case we did a number of things, one of which was Jobs Ontario Training, a program that got people off the welfare system and put them into real private sector jobs that pay real dollars — 95,000 people to be exact. But the member is trying to make people believe that nothing ever happened.

Then she gets up and says — and this is really amazing and the reason I want to comment — that she walked into her welfare department the other day and saw a jobs board.

**Mr Kormos:** Hot damn.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly. As the member for Welland-Thorold says, "Hot damn." What do you think has been happening for all these years? Do you think that the welfare departments were not trying to get people off welfare and into jobs and they didn't have jobs boards and that it was a Mike Harris government that invented jobs boards? Give your head a shake. It has been around for a while because it has always been the basis of the welfare system —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Member for Hamilton West, you have two minutes.

**Mrs Ross:** One comment I'd like to make is, yes, I have been in a welfare office prior to this, and in those times they were called welfare offices. It's not called that any more. It's called an employment and income maintenance office.

What I was really trying to emphasize was not so much what was posted on the board; I was trying to emphasize the attitude that has changed in those offices, the attitude that has changed and is focused much more on employment and on helping people get to work. It was a much

more positive attitude, and that's the point I was trying to get across.

I was disappointed that nobody commented on the appeal process, so I just want to reiterate that the appeal process is there, that it's a much more streamlined process, that there's an internal review first where issues can be resolved almost instantly before it goes to the tribunal. The social benefits tribunal then replaces the SARB and looks at the appeals as they go through, and they are fast-tracked so people know where they stand almost instantly, or within a matter of days, as opposed to 6.9 months. As they're waiting for their appeal they are provided with financial assistance if they need it. With respect to the appeal process, it's there, it's simplified, it's refined, it's streamlined and it makes it easier for people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** there is very little time left before 9:30. Therefore, I will adjourn the House until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2127.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Constituency<br>Circonscription | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti |
|---|---|
| Algoma | Wildman, Bud (ND) |
| Algoma-Manitoulin | Brown, Michael A. (L) |
| Beaches-Woodbine | Lankin, Frances (ND) |
| Brampton North / -Nord | Spina, Joseph (PC) |
| Brampton South / -Sud | Clement, Tony (PC) |
| Brant-Haldimand | Preston, Peter L. (PC) |
| Brantford | Johnson, Ron (PC) |
| Bruce | Fisher, Barbara (PC) |
| Burlington South / -Sud | **Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des pernonnes âgées) |
| Cambridge | Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) |
| Carleton | **Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.** (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie |
| Carleton East / -Est | Morin, Gilles E. (L) |
| Chatham-Kent | Carroll, Jack (PC) |
| Cochrane North / -Nord | Wood, Len (ND) |
| Cochrane South / -Sud | Bisson, Gilles (ND) |
| Cornwall | Cleary, John C. (L) |
| Don Mills | **Johnson, Hon / L'hon David** (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Dovercourt | Silipo, Tony (ND) |
| Downsview | Castrilli, Annamarie (L) |
| Dufferin-Peel | Tilson, David (PC) |
| Durham Centre / -Centre | Flaherty, Jim (PC) |
| Durham East / -Est | O'Toole, John R. (PC) |
| Durham West / -Ouest | **Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet** (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Durham-York | Munro, Julia (PC) |
| Eglinton | **Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William** (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme |
| Elgin | North, Peter (Ind) |
| Essex-Kent | Hoy, Pat (L) |
| Essex South / -Sud | Crozier, Bruce (L) |
| Etobicoke-Humber | Ford, Douglas B. (PC) |
| Etobicoke-Lakeshore | Kells, Morley (PC) |
| Etobicoke-Rexdale | Hastings, John (PC) |
| Etobicoke West / -Ouest | **Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris** (PC) Speaker / président |
| Fort William | McLeod, Lyn (L) |
| Fort York | Marchese, Rosario (ND) |
| Frontenac-Addington | Vankoughnet, Bill (PC) |
| Grey-Owen Sound | Murdoch, Bill (PC) |
| Guelph | Elliott, Brenda (PC) |
| Halton Centre / -Centre | Young, Terence H. (PC) |
| Halton North / -Nord | Chudleigh, Ted (PC) |
| Hamilton Centre / -Centre | Christopherson, David (ND) |
| Hamilton East / -Est | Agostino, Dominic (L) |
| Hamilton Mountain | Pettit, Trevor (PC) |
| Hamilton West / -Ouest | Ross, Lillian (PC) |
| Hastings-Peterborough | Danford, Harry (PC) |
| High Park-Swansea | Shea, Derwyn (PC) |
| Huron | Johns, Helen (PC) |
| Kenora | Miclash, Frank (L) |
| Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles | Gerretsen, John (L) |
| Kitchener | Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC) |
| Kitchener-Wilmot | Leadston, Gary L. (PC) |
| Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon | Pouliot, Gilles (ND) |
| Lambton | Beaubien, Marcel (PC) |
| Lanark-Renfrew | Jordan, W. Leo (PC) |
| Lawrence | Cordiano, Joseph (L) |
| Leeds-Grenville | **Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.** (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels |
| Lincoln | Sheehan, Frank (PC) |
| London Centre / -Centre | Boyd, Marion (ND) |
| London North / -Nord | **Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne** (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| London South / -Sud | Wood, Bob (PC) |
| Markham | **Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.** (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Middlesex | Smith, Bruce (PC) |
| Mississauga East / -Est | DeFaria, Carl (PC) |
| Mississauga North / -Nord | **Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John** (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation |
| Mississauga South / -Sud | Marland, Margaret (PC) |
| Mississauga West / -Ouest | **Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation) |
| Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne | Grimmett, Bill (PC) |
| Nepean | Baird, John R. (PC) |
| Niagara Falls | Maves, Bart (PC) |

| Constituency<br>Circonscription | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti |
|---|---|
| Niagara South / -Sud | Hudak, Tim (PC) |
| Nickel Belt | Laughren, Floyd (ND) |
| Nipissing | **Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.** (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif |
| Norfolk | Barrett, Toby (PC) |
| Northumberland | Galt, Doug (PC) |
| Oakville South / -Sud | Carr, Gary (PC) |
| Oakwood | Colle, Mike (L) |
| Oriole | Vacant |
| Oshawa | Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) |
| Ottawa Centre / -Centre | Patten, Richard (L) |
| Ottawa East / -Est | Grandmaître, Bernard (L) |
| Ottawa-Rideau | Guzzo, Garry J. (PC) |
| Ottawa South / -Sud | McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition |
| Ottawa West / -Ouest | Vacant |
| Oxford | Hardeman, Ernie (PC) |
| Parkdale | Ruprecht, Tony (L) |
| Parry Sound | **Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.** (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances |
| Perth | Johnson, Bert (PC) |
| Peterborough | Stewart, R. Gary (PC) |
| Port Arthur | Gravelle, Michael (L) |
| Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell | Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) |
| Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince EdwardLennox-Hastings-Sud | Fox, Gary (PC) |
| Quinte | Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC) |
| Rainy River | Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique |
| Renfrew North / -Nord | Conway, Sean G. (L) |
| Riverdale | Churley, Marilyn (ND) |
| S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est | Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones |
| St Andrew-St Patrick | Bassett, Isabel (PC) |
| St Catharines | Bradley, James J. (L) |
| St Catharines-Brock | Froese, Tom (PC) |
| St George-St David | Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Sarnia | Boushy, Dave (PC) |
| Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie | Martin, Tony (ND) |
| Scarborough-Agincourt | Phillips, Gerry (L) |
| Scarborough Centre / -Centre | Newman, Dan (PC) |
| Scarborough East / -Est | Gilchrist, Steve (PC) |
| Scarborough-Ellesmere | **Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn** (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs |
| Scarborough North / -Nord | Curling, Alvin (L) |
| Scarborough West / -Ouest | Brown, Jim (PC) |
| Simcoe Centre / -Centre | Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) |
| Simcoe East / -Est | McLean, Allan K. (PC) |
| Simcoe West / -Ouest | **Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim** (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé |
| Sudbury | Bartolucci, Rick (L) |
| Sudbury East / -Est | Martel, Shelley (ND) |
| Timiskaming | Ramsay, David (L) |
| Victoria-Haliburton | **Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris** (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Waterloo North / -Nord | **Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth** (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail |
| Welland-Thorold | Kormos, Peter (ND) |
| Wellington | Arnott, Ted (PC) |
| Wentworth East / -Est | Doyle, Ed (PC) |
| Wentworth North / -Nord | Skarica, Toni (PC) |
| Willowdale | **Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles** (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones |
| Wilson Heights | Kwinter, Monte (L) |
| Windsor-Riverside | Vacant |
| Windsor-Sandwich | Pupatello, Sandra (L) |
| Windsor-Walkerville | Duncan, Dwight (L) |
| York Centre / -Centre | **Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al** (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports |
| York East / -Est | Parker, John L. (PC) |
| York Mills | Turnbull, David (PC) |
| York-Mackenzie | Klees, Frank (PC) |
| Yorkview | Sergio, Mario (L) |
| York South / -Sud | Kennedy, Gerard (L) |

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
## COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins
Dave Boushy, David Christopherson, Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross, Bob Wood, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle, Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown, Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro, Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott, Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo, Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren, Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling, Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson, Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona, David Tilson, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese, Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett, Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot, Peter L. Preston, Sandra Pupatello, Derwyn Shea, Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen, Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy, Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development / Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten, Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

## Tuesday 2 September 1997

### SECOND READINGS

**Social Assistance Reform Act, 1997,**
Bill 142, *Mrs Ecker*
Mr Carroll .....11705, 11713, 11717
11726
Mr Michael Brown.....11705
Mr Laughren .....11706
Mrs Marland .....11706
Ms Lankin.....11706, 11709, 11724
11727
Mr Klees.....11706, 11710, 11727
11729
Mr Bradley .....11709, 11726
Mr Clement.....11709, 11723
Mr Crozier.....11710, 11717
Mr Morin.....11710, 11714
Mr Kormos.....11713, 11714, 11718
11723
Mr Gravelle.....11713, 11720, 11721
11724
Mr Martin.....11714, 11717, 11720
Mr Grimmett .....11717
Mr Pettit .....11718, 11721
Mr Baird.....11720
Mr Bisson.....11721, 11729
Mrs McLeod.....11724
Ms Churley.....11725, 11727, 11729
Mrs Ross .....11728, 11729
Mrs Pupatello.....11728
Debate deemed adjourned .....11730

# TABLE DES MATIÈRES

## Mardi 2 septembre 1997

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 1997 sur la réforme de l'aide sociale,** projet de loi 142, *M^me^ Ecker*
Débat présumé ajourné .....11730